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**Turkish Foreign Policy towards
the Middle East under the AKP
(2002-2013): a Neoclassical Realist
Account**

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Contents

<i>Abbreviations</i>	iv
<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	viii
<i>Declaration</i>	x
<i>Abstract</i>	xi
1. Introduction	1
PART I	10
2. Reviewing the Explanations of Turkish Foreign Policy	11
2.1. System-Level Analytical Approaches	20
2.2. Innepolitik Analytical Approaches	26
2.3. The “Third Way” – Integrating System-Level and Innepolitik Approaches	37
2.4. Conclusion	45
3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework	47
3.1. Research Design and Objectives	47
3.2. A Neoclassical Realist Framework for Turkish Foreign Policy	50
3.2.1. The System Level - Independent Variables	57
3.2.2. The Unit Level – Intervening Variables	67
3.2.2.1. AKP Elite Ideology – 1 st Intervening Variable	74
3.2.2.2. Domestic Interest Groups – 2 nd Intervening Variable	100
3.2.3. Dependent Variable – Foreign Policy Behaviour	105
3.2.4. Operationalising the Variables & Propositions	117

3.3. Case Study and Comparative Methods	124
PART II	133
4. Independent Variables and Turkey's Middle East Foreign Policy 2002-2011	135
4.1. International and Regional Power Changes	136
4.2. External Threat Perceptions	141
4.3. International Economic Interdependence	149
4.4. Independent Variables and the AKP's Middle East Foreign Policy	152
5. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Syria and Intervening Variables	156
5.1. Domestic Drivers and Turkey's Economic Policies towards Syria	156
5.2. Domestic Drivers and the Role of Iran in Turkey's Syria Security Policy	175
5.3. Conclusion	190
6. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Israel and Intervening Variables	192
6.1. Domestic Drivers and the Deterioration of Turkish-Israeli Relations	194
6.2. Domestic Drivers and the Role of Iran in Turkey's Israel Security Policy	214
6.3. Conclusions	226

PART III	229
7. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Syria and Israel 2011-2013	231
7.1. Independent Variables and Turkey's "Arab Spring" Foreign Policy	232
7.2. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Syria and Intervening Variables	250
7.3. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Israel and Intervening Variables	267
7.4. Conclusion	282
8. Comparative Analysis: Drivers, Causal Chains, and Foreign Policy Behaviour	286
8.1. Cross-Case Analysis	287
8.1.1. 2002-2011: System-Level and Unit-Level Variables	288
8.1.2. Turkey-Syria (2002-2011)	290
8.1.3. Turkey-Israel (2002-2011)	299
8.1.4. Conclusion – Cross-Case Comparison (2002-2011)	310
8.1.5. 2011-2013: System-Level and Unit-Level Variables	318
8.1.6. Turkey-Syria: Economic and Security Policies (2011-2013)	321
8.1.7. Turkey-Israel: Economic and Security Policies (2011-2013)	325
8.1.8. Cross-Case Comparison	329
8.2. Conclusion: Cross-Time Analysis	334
9. Conclusions	351
Bibliography	367
Appendix I: List of Interviewees	397

Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party (<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i>)
ANAP	Motherland Party (<i>Anavatan Partisi</i>)
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party (<i>Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi</i>)
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CC	Cross-Case (comparative analysis method)
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHP	Republican People's Party (<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i>)
CT	Cross-Time (comparative analysis method)
DP	Democratic Party (<i>Demokrat Parti</i>)
DYP	Truth Path Party (<i>Doğru Yol Partisi</i>)
EDAM	Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies (<i>Ekonomi ve Dış politika Araştırma Merkezi</i>)
EU	European Union
FM	Foreign Minister
FP	Virtue Party (<i>Fazilet Partisi</i>)
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
ICG	International Crisis Group
DEİK	Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (<i>Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu</i>)
IR	International Relations
KRG	Kurdish Regional Government
MHP	National Movement Party (<i>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi</i>)

MNP	National Order Party (<i>Milli Nizam Partisi</i>)
MP	Member of Parliament
MSP	National Salvation Party (<i>Milli Selamet Partisi</i>)
MÜSİAD	Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (<i>Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği</i>)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NcR	Neoclassical Realism
PJAK	Iranian Free Life Party of Kurdistan (<i>Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistane</i>)
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (<i>Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan</i>)
PM	Prime Minister
RP	Welfare Party (<i>Refah Partisi</i>)
SP	Felicity Party (<i>Saadet Partisi</i>)
TESEV	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (<i>Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı</i>)
TFP	Turkish Foreign Policy
TOBB	Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (<i>Türkiye Odalar ve Borsalar Birliği</i>)
TÜSİAD	Turkish Industry & Businessmen Association (<i>Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği</i>)
TUSKON	Confederation of Businessman and Industrialists of Türkiye (<i>Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu</i>)
UN	United Nations

US	United States
USAK	International Strategic Research Organization (<i>Uluslararası Stratejik Araştırmalar Kurumu</i>)
USD	United States Dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Table I	Domestic Interest Groups
Table II	Turkey-Syria: Economic Relations, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour
Table III	Turkey-Syria: Security Relations, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour
Table IV	Turkey-Israel: Declining Relations, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour
Table V	Turkey-Israel: The Role of Iran, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour
Table VI	Causal Chains in Comparative Perspective (2002-2011)
Table VII	Turkey-Syria: Non-intervention, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour
Table VIII	Turkey-Israel: 2011 Deterioration, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour
Table IX	Causal Chains in Comparative Perspective (2011-2013)

Figures

Figure I	Neoclassical Realist Framework & Turkish Foreign Policy Behaviour
Figure II	Two Models of Causal Relationships between Variables
Figure III	Hierarchy of Turkey's Foreign Policy Drivers

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parents, Antonis and Kyriaki, for their love, encouragement, tireless support and prayers throughout my studies. Words cannot capture my gratitude. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been entirely my own work and follows the guidelines provided in the Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research of the University of Warwick. The dissertation has not been submitted for a degree at another university and any errors within are entirely my own.

Zenonas Tziarras

Abstract

The problematique driving this research stems from the different approaches concerning Turkish foreign policy (TFP) under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) since 2002. Moreover, the controversy about TFP, also expands to a theoretical debate within the International Relations, and Foreign Policy Analysis, literature. However, although more balanced approaches have emerged in recent years to explain TFP, a comprehensive and systematically integrated approach that deals with TFP drivers, causal chains and foreign policy behaviour is yet to be seen; and this is a gap that this thesis seeks to fill.

In this light, this thesis' objective is to explain TFP towards the Middle East under the AKP. Thus, the central and overarching question to be answered is: what are the foreign policy-making dynamics under the AKP? The goal is to trace the causal relationship between the (independent and intervening) variables (system and domestic level) vis-à-vis the dependent variable (foreign policy behaviour) in terms of the foreign policy outcomes of "revisionism" and "status quo." In answering the overarching question, the thesis also addresses a set of sub-questions: how are domestic developments linked to external developments? Is there evidence of revisionism or ideological incentives in TFP? Answering such questions also allows for inferences on long-standing questions about TFP to be made. For example: is Turkey turning away from its traditional Western allies? Has Turkey been promoting peace and cooperation, or have its policies created polarisation between international actors?

The main argument is twofold. First it is argued that TFP under the AKP towards the Middle East has been revisionist. This stems from the fact that AKP elite ideology is revisionist and the domestic driver that has the primary role in filtering systemic dynamics and leading to the foreign policy outcome. Thus, whenever the circumstances – namely, little to no external or domestic effective opposition – allow AKP policy-makers to act according to their ideologically-charged rhetoric, TFP behaviour is revisionist. When AKP is constrained by other external or domestic drivers, TFP is more prone to maintaining the *status quo*. As such, system-level drivers (international power relations, external threat perceptions and international economic interdependencies), and most importantly international power relations, play the primary role in shaping and causing shifts in TFP but always in conjunction with unit-level variables.

Lastly, it is suggested that the region's volatility will keep forcing Turkey to switch back and forth in its alliance with the West not least because of the gap between its revisionist aspirations and its limited capabilities. The same aspirations will unavoidably be challenged as they face the reaction of other regional and international players.

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1. Introduction

The problematique driving this research stems from the contradictions in the foreign policy pursued by the Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP) since 2002 and the subsequent academic debate on how to explain Turkish foreign policy (TFP) behaviour. Moreover, the controversy about TFP, as presented in the first part of this thesis, also expands to a theoretical debate within the International Relations (IR), and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), literature.

More specifically, various authors and commentators have dwelt on whether Turkey has abandoned its traditional, *status quo*-oriented foreign policy for a more proactive – even revisionist – foreign policy that would also hinder Turkey-West relations. Others disagree, arguing not only that Turkey is still a *status quo* power but also a growing source of stability and peace-promotion in the region and beyond. Simultaneously, there are conflicting approaches towards understanding Turkey's foreign policy. Some of them explain it as being a consequence of the AKP's Islamic identity or ideology; as driven by realist security concerns; or as an indication of liberal desires for economic prosperity and regional cooperation. Although more balanced approaches have emerged in recent years, a comprehensive and systematically integrated approach that would deal both with TFP drivers and foreign policy behaviour is yet to be seen.

In this light, and given that the “new” doctrine of TFP has been the subject of much disagreement, the objective of this thesis is to explain TFP towards the

Middle East under the AKP. Thus, it is proposed that the central and overarching question to be answered is: what are the foreign policy-making dynamics under the AKP? The goal is to trace the causal relationship between the (independent and intervening) variables (system and domestic level) vis-à-vis the dependent variable (foreign policy behaviour) in terms of the foreign policy outcomes of “revisionism” and “status quo.”

Furthermore, in answering the overarching question, the thesis also addresses a set of sub-questions: how are domestic developments linked to external developments? Is there evidence of revisionism or ideological incentives in TFP? Answering such questions with regard to Turkish Middle East foreign policy also allows for inferences on long-standing questions about TFP to be made. For example: is Turkey turning away from its traditional western allies? Has Turkey been promoting peace and cooperation, or have its policies created polarisation between international actors?

These questions are not new. They rather stem from the rarely reconcilable approaches in the literature. Thus, this thesis does not aim to come up with new questions but to provide new and arguably more comprehensive answers than those in the literature, through the adoption of an integrated theoretical framework.

As such, the main argument of the thesis is twofold. With regard to TFP behaviour it is argued that TFP under the AKP towards the Middle East has been revisionist. Yet this argument could not have been made without the identification of TFP drivers. Thus, through a careful examination and analysis

of the different variables, this thesis argues that system-level drivers, and most importantly international power relations, play the most important role in shaping and causing shifts in TFP. External threat perceptions are of secondary importance and international economic interdependencies are third among systemic drivers. While there is a causal relationship among these three factors, since power relations affect threat perceptions and threat perceptions affect economic relations, Turkey's foreign economic relations are more often than not dissociated from other political and security relations.

However, it is argued that while system-level drivers are primary in calling for some foreign policy (re)action, Turkey's particular foreign policy decisions under the AKP would not have come to be without the particular intervening role of the domestic variables and most importantly the ideological outlook of AKP elites. In addition, the analysis reveals that the intervening variable which concerns AKP elite ideology is more significant in Turkish foreign policy-making than the role of domestic interest groups, which is relatively limited. Yet, despite the fact that AKP elite ideology occurs as the most significant domestic variable, it is argued that it does not always determine TFP as it can be constrained by other domestic and external factors under certain circumstances.

This is an argument inclusive of different levels, factors and policies which effectively bridges the analytical gap in the literature. It provides a specific and well-substantiated answer on TFP behaviour without merely attributing TFP decisions or changes to the international system or ideology, but by tracing the

role that each of these factors or levels has to play in the making of certain foreign policy outcomes.

The argument in this thesis will be articulated in three parts as follows. The first part deals with the literature on and explanations of TFP (chapter 2) and the theoretical framework and methodology adopted in this thesis (chapter 3). The second part is concerned with the analysis of TFP towards the two case studies (Syria and Israel) for the first period under examination (2002-2011). It does so in a systematic variable-based way, according to the Neoclassical Realist (NcR) theoretical framework (chapters 4, 5, and 6). The third and final part looks at the second period (2011-2013) under examination (chapter 7) and also includes a comparative analysis (chapter 8) of the case studies: across cases and across time periods. The thesis ends with the concluding chapter (9) that addresses the empirical, theoretical, and methodological strengths and limitations of the thesis and sets out an agenda for future research in TFP.

Based on the weaknesses identified in the literature, chapter 2 suggests that an alternative approach to TFP is needed that would integrate levels of analysis, material and ideational factors, as well as economic and security policies. This is achieved in two steps: first, the review of the literature on the explanations of TFP focusing on the AKP period; and second, the different explanations and analytical approaches to TFP are juxtaposed and associated with the relevant IR theories. This allows for two things: 1) to determine the problematic characteristics of the existing literature in understanding TFP; and

2) to locate the theoretical framework needed to address the primary research question, as well as situate the thesis within the broader debate and literature.

Chapter 3 reviews and explores some of the IR and FPA theoretical approaches identified in chapter 2 in more detail, and argues that NcR is the most suitable analytical approach within the Political Science sub-fields of IR and FPA, for this study. The NcR theoretical framework sets and elaborates on three independent variables (system level) and two intervening variables (domestic level). The system-level variables are: international power changes, external threat perceptions, and international economic interdependence. The domestic level variables are: AKP elite ideology, and domestic interest groups.

According to the theoretical framework, the system level has primary impact on policy-making while the domestic level plays an intervening role as it filters systemic dynamics in policy-making. Among other things, the goal of the analysis is to identify the causal role and weight of the different variables in the foreign policy outcome (dependent variable), which may vary between revisionist and *status quo* foreign policy behaviour. That is, to identify the causal chains that lead to foreign policy behaviour and the causal hierarchy of foreign policy drivers.

Chapter 3 also accounts for the methodology of the thesis. It is concerned with the research design, research methods, data collection methods, and the different primary and secondary sources. More importantly, it puts forward a limited number of propositions and elaborates on the methodology of comparative analysis adopted in the thesis. Specifically, the case study and

comparative methods are discussed, explaining how the two case studies are divided into two periods each. Accordingly, the comparative analysis chapter (8), first makes a Cross-Case (CC) comparison for each period (2002-2011 and 2011-2013) and then a Cross-Time (CT) comparison which compares the conclusions of the CC analysis of each period.

Following the logic of the theoretical framework, chapter 4 looks at the three independent variables (system level) in the context of the 2002-2011 period, specifically examining international and regional (Middle East) dynamics. Chapters 5 and 6 take an in-depth approach to the intervening variables with regard to the cases of Syria and Israel, respectively, in conjunction with the system-level observations of chapter 4. Each of these chapters examines the role of AKP elite ideology and domestic interest groups in a systematic way and draws conclusions about the role of intervening variables which are then taken into account by the broader comparative analysis.

Chapter 7 follows the same analytical logic and examines TFP towards the two case studies between 2011 and 2013 – that is, after the break out of the “Arab Spring.” At the system level it focuses on the changes the “Arab Spring” and other dynamics brought about to the three independent variables and continues with the intervening variables in Syria and Israel. From the perspective of the two time periods, which are divided based on changes in regional and international power relations (i.e. the primary independent variable), it becomes easier to evaluate change and continuity in TFP.

Chapter 8 employs the analysed information and conclusions of the previous chapters to conduct the CC and CT comparative analysis and ultimately address the initial and broader questions posed at the beginning. To better capture the causal role of the analysed and mainly domestic foreign policy drivers it compares them with counterfactual policies that depict TFP under the previous (Kemalist) political and military establishment. Lastly, it concludes by evaluating the system and unit levels, Turkey's economic and security policies, the hierarchy of foreign policy drivers, Turkey's revisionist or *status quo* foreign policy behaviour, and the issue of continuity and change in TFP.

Although the thesis is not meant to be primarily theoretical, but to rather construct and employ a theoretically informed framework for the analysis of TFP, its theoretical aspect is key in differentiating it from other studies. Further, the thesis has two major contributions to make to the literature. The first is empirical and has to do with identifying the drivers of TFP, their causal relationships and TFP behaviour. The second contribution is theoretical. This thesis does not build a theory but develops a theoretical framework based on NcR. Given that NcR is a rather underdeveloped theory especially when it comes to the independent and intervening variables it employs, this thesis furthers the research project of this theory by choosing certain variables and elaborating on their operationalisation. Moreover, it offers a comprehensive, systematic and extensive analytical (NcR) perspective on TFP that has not thus far been explored adequately or to this extent in the case of Turkey.

An additional strength and potential contribution of this thesis is that it goes beyond simply discussing TFP drivers by establishing causal chains that lead to certain foreign policy decisions. This is an essential element that distinguishes this study from other works on TFP that merely identify domestic, systemic or both kinds of foreign policy drivers. This approach also allows the reader to better understand what drivers are most important in TFP as well as the specific chains of drivers that correlate with different foreign policy behaviours. Indeed, the identified relationships between the drivers may not always be so definite as to argue for direct or certain causation, mainly due to some empirical limitations. Yet, the correlations deducted in such instances remain valuable given that they offer significant insights about each variable and its relationship with other domestic or external variables.

Lastly, it should be noted that just like any research and study, the thesis has its own limitations. There are primarily two kinds of limitations: methodological and theoretical. The methodological limitations mainly concern the Turkish language barrier and the limited access to elite interviewees due to the socially and politically busy period the country was going through during the research, and possibly the reluctance of politicians to expose their views and ideas. This has contributed to the lack of interviews from political personalities and specifically AKP politicians which could have confirmed some of the findings or strengthen some aspects of the thesis such as the argument about the worldviews of AKP elites. Although the language barrier may have limited the ability for the study of Turkish literature and the research of primary

Turkish documents, the multitude of Turkish sources in English and the great body of literature produced by Turkish academics and politicians compensated to a satisfactory degree.

In terms of theory, the thesis' NcR theoretical framework does not claim to cover all aspects of TFP under the AKP. It rather seeks to identify the main drivers of TFP and bridge certain analytical dualisms that can often be found in the literature such as, the relationship between the system and unit level, economic and security policies, and material and ideational drivers. In the process of the analysis other factors occasionally come up as noteworthy such as the individual personalities and political psychology of AKP leaders as well as domestic groups that the theoretical framework does not account for e.g. think tanks. Although it is suggested that taking into account these factors would not have produced significantly different results, further research on these aspects could indeed shed more light on some other dimensions of TFP.

PART I

2. Reviewing the Explanations of Turkish Foreign Policy

A Brief Historical Background of Turkish Foreign Policy

After the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, TFP was primarily influenced by the events of World War I (WWI) and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Apart from creating adversity towards imperialistic tendencies and strengthening the willingness for maintaining the *status quo*, these events, also defined how Turkey perceived the Arab world, since the Arabs played an important role in its defeat.¹ The “Ismet Inonu doctrine” (1938-1950) of reservation, neutrality, maintenance of the *status quo* and compartmentalisation, is a good example that reflects the TFP of the time, between the establishment of the Turkish state and the beginning of the Cold War.² These features were also a reflection of Kemal Ataturk’s – the founder of the Turkish Republic - principles that influenced TFP, such as a nationalist and independent understanding of statehood, modernization and secularisation, and the adoption of a *realpolitik* approach to foreign policy.³

¹ Joshua W. Walker, "Turkey's Imperial Legacy: Understanding Contemporary Turkey Through its Ottoman Past," *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology* 8(2009): 499.

² Malik Mufti, *Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea* (New York: Palgrave, 2009). 31-32.

³ During the period from the establishment of the Turkish Republic to the end of WWII, a one-party (Republican People's Party – CHP) political system was in place and Kemalism was the dominant ideology both among the bureaucratic and military elites. Kemalism remained the dominant ideology until the late 20th and early 21st century. The CHP's ideological principles were republicanism, nationalism, populism, etatism (statism), secularism, and revolutionism. Republicanism entailed a political system that ensured and safeguarded the “ideal of national sovereignty” while nationalism focused on the preservation of the “special character and independent identity of the Turkish social life.” Populism meant the equal responsibility of the state and the citizen towards each other, as well as

After the end of WWII – during which Turkey remained mostly neutral⁴ - and the beginning of the Cold War, Turkey's actions could be described as inconsistent with its traditional foreign policy. Although its accession into NATO (1952) contradicted its previous impartiality, it can be explained as a result of "Stalin's expansionist statements"⁵ and part of Kemal Atatürk's programme of Westernisation. Thereafter, Turkey acquired the role of containing the Soviet Union and thus its threat perceptions were, for the most part, in line with those of its regional and international anti-Soviet Union allies. Yet during the same period, the governments of Menderes (1950-1960), Demirel (1965-1971), Ecevit (1974, 1977-1979), and Özal (1983-1989), sought to improve

the equalisation of the Turkish people with an organised community of different professions, as opposed to a class-based society. Etatism introduced the active interference of the state in all issues that concern the nation's interests, whilst secularism separated the state from religious beliefs and declared that state decisions and actions should be based upon science and secular principles. Lastly, revolutionism holds that CHP should remain faithful to the principles that had stemmed from the people's revolutions and conquests. Overall, as it occurs from the importance of Kemalist ideology, the individual leadership of Kemal Atatürk played a determining role both in the establishment of Turkish Republic and TFP. His dominance over the military and CHP essentially gave him the control over every aspect of the state and its policies. This lasted not only until his death in 1938 but also until 1950 (continued by İsmet İnönü) when a two-party political system emerged. Turkish politics was perhaps not so much concentrated on individual leadership after that but the dominance of the Kemalist military elites over politics did not weaken up until the late 2000s, thus consolidating to a great extent the emergence of a secular Kemalist national identity. Yet, even in contemporary Turkey, after the election of the AKP and Prime Minister Erdoğan to power, the role of a dynamic leader and its acceptance by society remains important as the case of Erdoğan showed. It is worth noting that although the AKP and the Prime Minister are situated somewhere between conservative democracy and political Islam, a big part of society has not stopped aspiring to the principles of Kemalism and has not forgotten about the modernization and westernization programme promised and pursued by the founder of the Republic. See, Niyazi Kızılyürek, *Κεμαλισμός: Γένεση και η Εξέλιξη της Επίσημης Ιδεολογίας της Σύγχρονης Τουρκίας* [Kemalism: The Birth and Evolution of the Ideology of Contemporary Turkey] (Athens: Mesogeios, 2006). 55-57.

⁴ Walker, "Turkey's Imperial Legacy: Understanding Contemporary Turkey Through its Ottoman Past," 398-99.

⁵ Philip Robins, *Suits and Uniforms: Turkish Foreign Policy after the Cold War* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003). 162.

Turkey's relations with the Arab states: Menderes also tried to approach Israel⁶ while Demirel approached even the Soviet Union.⁷ Moreover, Ecevit's coalition government (1972-1980) went on to unilaterally invade Cyprus in 1974 in a demonstration of independent foreign policy and national interest, following the disappointing US stance on the Cyprus and Cuban crises of the 1960s. Although that was celebrated in Turkish public opinion, it led to the deterioration of its relations with the US and the international community.⁸

One of the most unique governments – as it challenged some of the central tenets of Kemalism – was that of Özal (1983-1989 as Prime Minister and 1989-1993 as President). Özal followed a policy of intense liberalisation, along with a wide – albeit rather unsuccessful – opening in foreign policy, especially as President after the end of the Cold War. His policies contradicted the military thus making the latter feel rather threatened.⁹ Under his governance Turkey also sought better trade relations and economic development, and adopted a new ethnic policy that strayed from the traditional Kemalist doctrine – which sought the creation of a homogenised (ethnocentric) Turkic nation – by recognising “the existence of other ethnic groups and the multi-ethnic structure

⁶ Ibid., 99-100; Amikam Nachmani, *Israel, Turkey, and Greece: Uneasy Relations in the East Mediterranean* (London: Frank Cass, 1987). 50-52.

⁷ Kemal H. Karpat, "Turkish and Arab-Israeli Relations," in *Turkey's Foreign Policy in Transition 1950-1974*, ed. Kemal H. Karpat (Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1975), 125-33.

⁸ Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London, New York: I.B.Tauris, 2004). 275-76.

⁹ Kerem Öktem, *Angry Nation: Turkey since 1989* (Nova Scotia: Zed Books, 2011). 56-83; Mufti, *Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea*: 50-84; Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*: 278-94.

of the country, and defin[ing] Turkish ethnicity based on cultural and ethnic dimensions.”¹⁰

Additionally, Özal’s domestic reforms and policies targeted, among other things, the military’s administrative dominance.¹¹ Similarly to the AKP, Özal tried to pursue a proactive foreign policy, more autonomous and not so dependent on the West; a policy that has been called by some neo-Ottomanism.¹² In this context, he improved Turkey’s relations with the region, the states that emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Islamic world more generally.¹³ It was specifically after the end of the Cold War that Özal supported a neo-Ottoman “diversified foreign policy in the region based on the Ottoman historical heritage” of Turkey.¹⁴

After Özal’s death (1993) his foreign policy orientation was largely abandoned – apart from attempts such as those of Erbakan (1996-1997).¹⁵ In the post-Cold war era, TFP was defined by external systemic changes and Turkey’s search for a new role. The Soviet threat was replaced by newly emerged “zones

¹⁰ Muhittin Ataman, "Özal Leadership and Restructuring of Turkish Ethnic Policy in the 1980s," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no. 4 (2002): 128.

¹¹ Muhittin Ataman, "Leadership Change: Özal Leadership and Restructuring in Turkish Foreign Policy," *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* 1, no. 1 (2002): 124.

¹² It will be shown below that there are different interpretations of what a neo-ottoman policy entails. See, for example, Ömer Taspınar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism," *Carnegie Papers* 10(2008); Inan Rüma, "Turkish Foreign Policy towards the Balkans: New-Activism, Neo-Ottomanism or/so What?," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (09/03/2011): 134-40; Michael Rubin, "Shifting Sides? The Problems of Neo-Ottomanism," *National Review Online* 10/08/2004

¹³ Ataman, "Leadership Change," 131-40.

¹⁴ Alexander Murinson, "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy," *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 6 (2006): 946.

¹⁵ Alan Makovsky, "How to Deal with Erbakan," *Middle East Quarterly* IV, no. 1 (1997).

of conflict," and other bilateral security border problems.¹⁶ The crises with Cyprus, Greece, and Syria, the "soft" or "postmodern" coup of 1997, the weak coalition governments of the 1990s, as well as divisions within the Islamic parties¹⁷ created the conditions for the formation of the AKP.¹⁸

In the wake of the new millennium Turkey was also faced with significant geopolitical problems in its external environment. Apart from the global reach that the effects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks had, the US reaction and the initiation of the Global War on Terrorism brought about structural changes in Turkey's neighbourhood.¹⁹ After 9/11, terrorism, and particularly Islamic terrorism, became a prioritised national security threat. In this light, Turkey as a Muslim country and a traditional US ally gained significant value for the West – i.e. the US, EU and NATO. However, its alliance with the West on the one hand, and the US's intention to go after "states procuring weapons of mass

¹⁶ Mustafa Aydin, "The Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy, and Turkey's European Vocation," *The Review of International Affairs* 3, no. 2 (2003): 322-25; Soli Özel, "Waves, Ways and Historical Turns: Turkey's Strategic Quest," in *On Turkey* (The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 30/01/2012), 87, 154; Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 2008).

¹⁷ Around the mid-1990s, under Necmettin Erbakan, there emerged differences of opinion within the RP. After the RP was banned by the Constitutional Court and its Islamist successor FP was established, an ideological split became clearer between traditionalists (pro-Erbakan) and modernists (pro-Erdoğan). The race for the party's leadership between Kutun (Erbakan's choice) and Gül (as Erdoğan was at the time banned from politics) in 2000 ended with the victory of Kutun. The banning of the FP soon after that (2001) led to the establishment of two different parties with Islamic roots: the Felicity Party (SP) of the traditionalists and the Justice and Development party (AKP) which came to power in 2002. See, William Hale and Ergun Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010). 18-19.

¹⁸ Aydin, "The Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy, and Turkey's European Vocation," 325; Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP*: 13-19.

¹⁹ Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). 297-98.

destruction (WMD)" on the other, posed new threats to Turkey.²⁰ The former made it a target of terrorist attacks in 2003, which were allegedly connected to Al-Qaeda, while the latter led to the 2003 Iraq War which intensified Turkey's fears about the prospects of a permanent Kurdish autonomy thus creating conflicting geopolitical interests between the US and Turkey.²¹

Within such external turmoil Turkey was led to elections in 2002. They were mainly the result of the instability in the 90s and the collapse of Turkish financial markets in 2001, with all the negative repercussions it had for society.²² The general elections of November 4, 2002, brought to power the AKP and, by extension, stirred up a lively debate about contemporary TFP.²³ The AKP implemented the economic stabilization programme which was adopted in 2001, along with a number of reforms. The rise of the AKP to power was also accompanied by a pro-active foreign policy in response to Turkey's post-9/11 geopolitical challenges.

The AKP managed, more successfully than any previous government, to deal with domestic and external problems by commercially engaging its

²⁰ Ibid., 297.

²¹ Soner Çağaptay and Tyler Evans, "Turkey's Changing Relations with Iraq: Kurdistan Up, Baghdad Down," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy Policy Focus* 122(October, 2012); Adam Ward and James Hackett (eds), "Terror in Turkey: The Problem of Intelligence Gathering," *Strategic Comments* 9, no. 10 (December 2003), <http://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/past-issues/volume-9-2003/volume-9---issue-10/terror-in-turkey/>; Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey's New Engagement in Iraq," *United States Institute of Peace Special Report* 237(2010); Bill Park, "Iraq's Kurds and Turkey: Challenges for US Policy," *Parameters* 34, no. 3 (2004): 18-30.

²² Melia Benli Altunışık and Özlem Tür, *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005). 83-86.

²³ The AKP won 34.4% of the votes and 363 of the 550 seats in the parliament, thus forming a single-party government.

neighbours thereby gradually abandoning its adversity towards outwardness.²⁴ Despite examples of previous similar policy attempts, such as those of Özal and Erbakan, the AKP's foreign policy orientation attracted particular attention. Some scholars led by the fact that the AKP "describes itself as 'conservative democrat'," suggested that its "different worldview... has influenced its policy choices."²⁵ In addition, the debate was influenced by claims that whilst Turkey promoted regional peace and cooperation, it seemed to be gradually turning away from its Western allies thus seeking a more autonomous role, to the end of becoming a regional hegemony.

The Debate over the AKP's Foreign Policy

In this context, Turkey's "new" foreign policy under the AKP has become subject to many and different explanations. These explanations can be categorised into two main and overarching analytical approaches, namely, "systemic" (or system-level) and "domestic" (or Innepolitik) based on IR and FPA literature.²⁶ The distinction between systemic and domestic approaches can also be related to the structure-agent problem. It is useful because it allows for the examination of different factors influencing TFP on different levels and will, therefore, help in the selection of the variables that will be analysed. In what follows, these "approaches" will be presented and contextualised within a

²⁴ Özel, "Waves, Ways and Historical Turns: Turkey's Strategic Quest," 3.

²⁵ Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP*: 24; Nader Habibi and Joshua W. Walker, "What Is Driving Turkey's Reengagement with the Arab World?," *Crown Centre for Middle East Studies, Middle East Brief* 49(April, 2011): 1.

²⁶ This categorisation is made by this thesis.

broader theoretical debate. The aim is to identify their weaknesses and strengths in order to arrive at an alternative approach to analysing the AKP's foreign policy.

Malik Mufti identifies two main "schools of thought" in the literature with regard to explaining TFP under the AKP. The first one maintains that the AKP's foreign policy "arises not from pragmatic calculations of Turkish state interest... but out of ideological fanaticism... that is creating a virulently anti-American and anti-Western Turkish public opinion and political culture." The second one argues that the shift in TFP since the end of the Cold War has what could be called a "liberal orientation" based on pragmatic – mainly commercial – interests seeking regional cooperation and integration, while at the same time remaining pro-Western. Mufti names these schools "anti-Western Islamism" and "integrationist liberalism," respectively.²⁷ Moreover, he writes that the policy approach of neo-Ottomanism, as put forward by Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu,²⁸ in his book *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic Depth), is pragmatic.²⁹ To be sure, the critiques and interpretations of Turkey's "neo-Ottomanism" vary and could not be simply described as pragmatic.

²⁷ Malik Mufti, "A Little America: The Emergence of Turkish Hegemony," in *Middle East Brief* (Crown Centre for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, April 2010), 2-3.

²⁸ During the period under examination in this thesis, Ahmet Davutoğlu went from a foreign affairs consultant to the Prime Minister to a Foreign Minister in 2009. Yet, his contribution to the AKP's foreign policy is pivotal throughout the governance of the party. In the summer of 2014 Ahmet Davutoğlu became Prime Minister and the Chairman of AKP after Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was elected President. Because the timeframe of this thesis stops at 2013, Davutoğlu is referred to as foreign minister and Erdoğan as Prime Minister.

²⁹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Το Στρατηγικό Βάθος: Η Διεθνής Θέση της Τουρκίας* [Strategic Depth: Turkey's Place in the World] (Athens: Poiotita, 2010). 146-48.

Contrary to Mufti's schools of thought that are mostly defined in theoretical and epistemological terms, a broader categorisation that would divide the explanations of TFP into systemic/structural and domestic/Innepolitik approaches seems more appropriate, given the debates in the existing literature and the aim of this thesis. In addition, within the framework of the two broad categories, further classification of these approaches could be made along epistemological and theoretical lines such as positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, realism, and liberalism. By following this method of categorisation and classification of the literature, the theoretical approach of the thesis will be better contextualised and equipped to address the existing gaps in the explanations of TFP with regard to the structure/agency question, and pragmatic/ideational incentives in foreign policy-making.

As mentioned above, one of the most significant debates about Turkey's "new" foreign policy is whether – and if so, why – Turkey is abandoning its traditional Western allies, namely the US and NATO, as well as its willingness to enter the EU, for a more autonomous role and a closer relationship with the Muslim world in general and the Arab world in particular. There is a contribution to this debate through analyses of debatable facts and Turkish policies, such as Ankara's decision not to allow American troops into Iraq through its territories during the 2003 Iraq war; its vote against the US-backed sanctions for Iran in the UN Security Council in 2010; its cooperation with Russia and Brazil in the energy and nuclear fields; its deteriorated relations

with Israel; and its closer and multileveled cooperation with Middle East and Balkan states under proclamations and the rhetoric of Islamic solidarity.³⁰ Looking at how the different analytical approaches to TFP explain some of these facts and policies will help in identifying the weaknesses in the literature and in demonstrating more clearly how this thesis will seek to add value to it.

This chapter reviews some works on TFP according to their level-of-analysis and theoretical approach – e.g. realism, liberalism, Constructivism. It begins by looking at works on TFP that fall under the category of System-Level approaches. It then continues with Innepolitik (or domestic-level) approaches, and concludes with some academic works that have made efforts to integrate these levels thus adopting a “third way.” It is argued that this thesis contributes to and advances the latter category through a Neoclassical Realist theoretical framework that integrates both levels-of-analysis as well as different drivers – i.e. material and ideational.

2.1. System-Level Analytical Approaches

To begin with, one of the most prominent analytical approaches to IR and foreign policy diachronically is structuralism, be it realist, liberal, or otherwise. Generally, structuralism holds that “individuals act in accordance with structures that they cannot see, and of which they may have no awareness.”³¹

³⁰ Mehmet Özkan, "Turkey-Brazil Involvement in Iranian Nuclear Issue: What is the big Deal?," *Strategic Analysis* 35, no. 1 (January, 2011): 26-30; Söner Çağaptay, "Is Turkey Leaving the West?," *Foreign Affairs* (26/10/2009).

³¹ Stuart McAnulla, "Structure and Agency," in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, ed. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (London: Palgrave, 2002), 275.

For example, James Fearon divides system-level (structural) IR theories into two “broad classes” – i.e. S1 and S2. He maintains that S1 is “a systemic IR theory...that envisions states as unitary and purposive actors” while S2, although largely the same as S1, conditions certain “explanatory variables” in order for the theory to remain systemic.³²

Overall, systemic theories of IR or FPA seem to be dominated mainly by positivist epistemologies, which are concurrent with the principles of liberalism, neoliberalism, and realism as well as, to a lesser extent, the principles of certain strands of constructivism.³³ However, it is worth noting that with regard to the analysis of TFP the structural approaches are mostly limited to (neo)liberalism and (neo)realism; this observation, of course, is not without exceptions.

Liberal theories see democratic states as actors “fundamentally against war” because they are “founded on such individual rights as equality before the law, free speech and other civil liberties, private property, and elected representation.”³⁴ Also, in line with neorealism, neoliberalism perceives states as rational actors which exist in an anarchic state-centric international system. The anarchy of the international system, the lack of a central authority, is seen by neorealists and neoliberals as the primary and fundamental factor that

³² James D. Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science* 1(1998): 291.

³³ See for example, Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 391-425.

³⁴ Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review* 8, no. 4 (1986): 1151; see also, Michael W. Doyle, "Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs, Part I," *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (1983): 205-35.

shapes foreign policies and therefore international political outcomes. The absence of central authority, the argument goes, necessitates that states adopt a self-help stance whereby they rely only on themselves. In turn, they find themselves in a constant international struggle for power and preparation for conflict. This leads to a number of strategies, among which power maximization, alliance formation, etc.

However, whereas realism argues that the anarchy of the international system leads to power struggles and the “security dilemma,” neoliberalism argues that it leads to cooperation and the establishment of international regimes.³⁵ The differences between the two lies primarily in the outcomes of anarchy. In other words, liberal states, according to neoliberalism, tend to seek political and economic cooperation, which is in their best interest as it is driven by “material incentives,” thus creating common interests and alleviating any disputes. This is in contrast to the neorealist understanding that anarchy leads, more often than not to conflict. Further, neoliberalism also sees institutions as important “patterns of practice... because they affect state behaviour.”³⁶

In terms of the previously mentioned debatable foreign policies of Turkey, as far as the systemic analytical approaches to TFP are concerned and especially its neoliberal explanations, Turkey’s actions, like its cooperation with Iran, Russia, and Brazil in the field of nuclear energy, constitute efforts of building trust among regional and international actors by cautiously, but not entirely,

³⁵ David A. Baldwin, "Neoliberalism, Neorealism, and World Politics," in *Neorealism and Neorealism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David A. Baldwin (New York: Columbia University, 1993), 4-5.

³⁶ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (New Jersey, West Sussex: Princeton University Press, 1984). 8.

stepping away from Western interests in order to promote cooperation and thus peace and security.

A similar interpretation is being given for the decline in Turkish-Israeli relations and the Islamic solidarity rhetoric, based on the fact that Turkey needs to maintain the good economic relations it has developed particularly with the Arab states.³⁷ Ioannis Grigoriadis, for example, by slightly straying from a traditional structural analysis as he looks at domestic factors (e.g. individuals) as well, argues that for Turkish FM, Davutoğlu, and therefore for Turkey, the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme was an “opportunity to put his proactive foreign policy into work.”³⁸

In a similar vein, Stephen Kinzer argues that in the long-term, Turkey, along with Iran and the US could create a new strategic triangular partnership since they all share common regional interests, like the desire for democratic values and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also argues that Turkey’s shift towards Islamism could be beneficial for the West, and particularly the US, because as a Muslim country “Turkey can go places, engage partners, and make deals that America cannot.”³⁹

Other scholars emphasise structural/realist determinants of TFP even more, and place the Iranian issue within the framework of the increasing orientation of TFP towards the Middle East. From that perspective Turkey is indeed focusing more on its neighbourhood, though not because of a calculated

³⁷ See for example Habibi and Walker, "What Is Driving Turkey's Reengagement with the Arab World?," 6-7.

³⁸ Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy," (ELIAMEP, 2010), 7.

³⁹ Stephen Kinzer, *Reset: Iran, Turkey and America's Future* (New York: Times Books, 2010). 198, 208-09.

plan, as other Innepolitik explanations suggest, but because it “has gradually become inevitable” due to the role that the Middle East plays in Turkey’s “national security interests” and its relations with the US and the EU. In this context it would not be “a realistic course of action” for Turkey to exclude Iran from its regional policies, especially since it “does not share the same security perceptions of the West vis-à-vis Iran.”⁴⁰ However, it is still maintained that Turkey’s relations with the West are not compromised but rather that there is a “growing salience of the Middle East” in their relations.⁴¹

In this spirit, Bülent Aras argues that the AKP’s neo-Ottoman policy approach is a continuation of Özal’s proactive foreign policy and of the efforts of previous governments for EU membership while he goes on to note that “Davutoğlu formulated a more comprehensive foreign policy vision and developed policy mechanisms to tackle the challenges of globalization in a post-nation state age.”⁴² Grigoriadis makes a similar argument while he adds that Davutoğlu’s foreign policy vision includes “liberal elements, such as soft power, conflict resolution and promotion of ‘win-win’ solutions.”⁴³

Hugh Pope, although he acknowledges a shift in TFP and considers Ankara’s recent behaviour towards Israel and Iran flawed because it puts it in a problematic position vis-à-vis the US, still argues that “Turkey remains engaged

⁴⁰ Tarik Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey’s Foreign Policy: Does Turkey Dissociate from the West?," *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 1 (March, 2008): 3, 9; Tarik Oğuzlu, "Soft Power in Turkish Foreign Policy," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 61, no. 1 (March, 2007): 93.

⁴¹ Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey’s Foreign Policy," 3.

⁴² Bulent Aras, "Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy," in *SETA Policy Brief* (Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, May, 2009), 6-7.

⁴³ Grigoriadis, "The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy," 4.

principally with the West.”⁴⁴ His reasoning is based on the fact that the EU is Turkey’s most important economic partner, on the one hand, and that the US is its most important ally on the other – in terms of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars as well as the Kurdish insurgency and the Israeli-Palestinian problem.⁴⁵

Many structural – and especially liberal – approaches do not take into account that, despite the strong EU-Turkey economic partnership, Turkey’s economic and trade relations with the states of the Middle East, especially with those of the Arab world, have risen rapidly throughout the 2000s, while the opposite has happened in its trade relations with the EU. For example, the total exports from Turkey to the EU dropped from 58%, in 2007, to 48% in 2009; in the same period, its exports to its Muslim neighbours have risen from around 28% to 38%.⁴⁶ In the years that followed Turkey’s exports to the EU dropped even more: around 43% in 2008 and around 45% in 2011.⁴⁷ As seen below, a return to the EU can be noticed in Turkey’s foreign economic policies, but it is argued that system-level changes such as the “Arab Spring” have played a primary role in that.

Furthermore, approaches like Kinzer’s, about the cooperation between Turkey, the US and even Iran, seem to neglect the multidimensional nature of Turkey’s regional role, and also the many conflicting interests between Turkey

⁴⁴ Hugh Pope, "Pax Ottomana?: The Mixed Success of Turkey’s New Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 89, no. 6 (Nov./Dec. 2010): 169-71; Philip Robins, "Turkish Foreign Policy Since 2002: Between a ‘Post-Islamist’ Government and a Kemalist State," *International Affairs* 83, no. 1 (2007): 290, 89-304.

⁴⁵ Pope, "Pax Ottomana?: The Mixed Success of Turkey’s New Foreign Policy," 169-71.

⁴⁶ Habibi and Walker, "What Is Driving Turkey’s Reengagement with the Arab World?," 4.

⁴⁷ European Commission, "Trade - Countries and Regions: Turkey," <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/turkey/>.

and the US that stem not only from the external geopolitical environment of Turkey but also from “internal enemies,” security complexes and perceptions within the country itself. In that sense, purely structural understandings of Turkey’s policies, despite their moderate conclusions that point to Turkey adopting a “Middle Easternized” foreign policy without dissociating from the West, lack focus on domestic agents, thus missing possible correlations that could be made between ideologically driven rhetoric and policy decisions.⁴⁸

2.2. Innepolitik Analytical Approaches

At the other end of the analytical spectrum can be found Innepolitik/domestic-level foreign policy explanations related to identity, ideology, norms, values, individuals, culture, psychology, political systems, etc. With regard to the literature on TFP these explanations are consistent with theories like constructivism, culturalism, and orientalism, as well as, to a lesser extent, (liberal) institutionalism and political economy, while their epistemologies range from positivism, to post-positivism, to orientalism.

Fearon divides domestic-political IR theories into two categories (D1 & D2) in such a way so as to correspond to the above-mentioned S1 and S2 categories of systemic IR theories. Thus, according to him, the D1 category includes theories that “picture one or more states as non-unitary, with domestic interactions yielding suboptimal foreign policy choices.” On the other hand, D2 includes D1, as well as “arguments that explain differences in state’s foreign

⁴⁸ Oğuzlu, “Middle Easternization of Turkey’s Foreign Policy.”

policies by referring to unit-level attributes of states.”⁴⁹ The two categories may not necessarily seem to be embracing post-positivist or orientalist epistemologies, but “domestic interactions” as well as “unit-level attributes of states” may indeed be referring to ideational, cultural or psychological factors which could lead to epistemologies other than positivism. As far as the way such different epistemologies could occur it depends on the operationalisation of each theory and the ontological and causal understandings they maintain for the system and other domestic agents.

Identity, Ideology, and Turkish Foreign Policy

As identity and ideology are two of the most important characteristics of Innepolitik theories of foreign policy, and of TFP in particular, it would be helpful to first pay some attention to these concepts, and identify the different understandings of identity as well as highlight the distinctions and relationship between them and ideology.

Generally, it can be said that “Social identification is the process by which we define ourselves in terms and categories that we share with other people..., [while] social identities assume some commonalities with others.”⁵⁰ When the identity in question is the national one, then there can be more than one understanding of it. Daniele Conversi, drawing, among others, upon Anthony

⁴⁹ Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations," 299-300.

⁵⁰ Kay Deaux, "Social Identity," in *Encyclopedia of Women and Gender: Sex Similarities and Differences and the Impact of Society on Gender*, ed. Judith Worell (California, London: Academic Press, 2001), 1059.

Smith and Donald Horowitz, distinguishes between primordialist and instrumentalist understandings of national identity.⁵¹

From this perspective, on the one hand primordialist approaches “appeal to emotional and instinctive constraints as ultimate explanations for national mobilisation,” thus challenging the notion of state rationality on the basis of material incentives when it comes to decision-making, which is a mostly positivist approach.⁵² On the other hand, the instrumentalist approach acknowledges the “strategic utility” identity has for the achievement of pragmatic ends – whether realist or liberal.⁵³ It is important to note that the instrumentality, or even manipulation, of various identities (national, religious, ethnic, etc.) is acknowledged by liberalism and realism as a means for the achievement of political ends and thus also falls under the positivism category.

Theoretically, ontologically, and even epistemologically primordialism, with regard to national identity, can be associated with orientalism as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the ‘Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’,”⁵⁴ while instrumentalism can be associated with constructivism. This latter linkage between instrumentalism and constructivism has been suggested by David

⁵¹ It needs to be acknowledged that these two distinctions remain narrow within the fields of International Relations and Security, while they are not – necessarily – followed by post-positivist epistemologies.

⁵² Daniele Conversi, "Mapping the Field: Theories of Nationalism and the Ethnosymbolic Approach," in *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations*, ed. Athena S. Leoussi and Steven Grosby (Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 15-16.

⁵³ Ibid., 16.

⁵⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). 2; A. K. Ramakrishnan, "The Gaze of Orientalism: Reflections on Linking Postcolonialism and International Relations," *International Studies* 36, no. 2 (1999): 131-32.

Brown.⁵⁵ Brown argues among other things that constructivism is a “conceptual language” that sees nationalism as an ideology, that is, “based on ideological myths constructed by displaced or aspiring élites, and appealing to societies whose social structures and political autonomy had been displaced.”⁵⁶ It should be noted that constructivism is a very broad conceptual framework which has been categorised into variants or strands by various scholars mainly based on epistemological criteria.⁵⁷

Admittedly, Conversi’s and Brown’s reference to constructivism would be more consistent with the “neoclassical” or “thinner” epistemological understandings of the theory – as it does not refute an empirically identifiable reality.⁵⁸ Yet, key overarching features of constructivism would suggest that “a set of ideas, a body of thought, [and] a system of norms, which has been arranged by certain people at a particular time and place”⁵⁹ could be both

⁵⁵ Conversi, “Mapping the Field,” 16; David Brown, *Contemporary Nationalism: Civic, Ethnocultural & Multicultural Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000). It should be acknowledged here that there is a great body of literature on the relationship between identity and IR which, however, cannot be covered here. Among many other works see, for example, David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992); Iver B. Newmann, “Self and Other in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 2, no. 2 (1996): 139-74.

⁵⁶ Brown, *Contemporary Nationalism: Civic, Ethnocultural & Multicultural Politics*: 4, 27.

⁵⁷ According to Ruggie the epistemological division is between “neoclassical” and “postmodernist” constructivism while Wendt suggests a division along the lines of “thin” and “thick” constructivism. See, John Gerard Ruggie, “What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-Utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge,” *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (Autumn, 1998): 880-82; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999). 1-44.

⁵⁸ Samuel J. Barkin, “Realist Constructivism,” *International Studies Review* 5(2003): 326-237.

⁵⁹ Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). 162.

instrumentalised as well as affect the actions of policy-makers.⁶⁰ From that perspective, at the same time that human beings are, for many constructivists, the primary agents “who fashion – and have the capacity to change – social reality,” their “collective ideas and norms” construct, and thus also constitute, “both identities and interests;” therefore, “‘national interest’ is not objectively given... but must be interpreted through the prism of ideas.”⁶¹

This is the point where the difference between the two understandings of identity and ideology becomes clear. The primordialist understandings of identity, apart from being orientalist, suggest an essentialist and direct relationship between national identity and decision-making. As such, a primordial identity is the most important factor – or at least one of them – in shaping ideas, ideologies, and therefore policies, through decision-making processes. The (neoclassical/thinner) constructivist/instrumentalist understanding of identity, as put forward by Conversi and Brown specifically, maintains a somewhat reverse logic suggesting that ideas construct identities as well as instrumentalise them for political reasons. If this is the case, and to present a simplified version of the above elaboration of the role of ideational factors in policy-making, it occurs that there are two main ways of understanding ideas, and thus ideology, as well: that suggested by

⁶⁰ Theo Farrell, "Constructivist Security Studies: Portrait of a Research Program," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 1 (2002): 50; Conversi, "Mapping the Field," 16-17.

⁶¹ David P. Houghton, "Reinvigorating the Study of Foreign Policy Decision Making: Toward a Constructivist Approach," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3(2007): 28-29.

primordialism/orientalism, and that suggested by constructivism/instrumentalism.⁶²

In a different text, Conversi describes ideology as “a set of ideas articulated around a sociopolitical programme devised by specific individuals, whom we may recognise occasionally as the ‘ideologues’ and, until recently, could be identified as ‘intellectuals’.”⁶³ Although Conversi’s definition is very much in line with the constructivist approach, she also notes that it is difficult for an ideology to be seen neutrally “since scholarly endeavours are also informed by ideology.”⁶⁴

Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane define ideas as beliefs “- shared by large numbers of people – about the nature of their worlds that have implications for human action” including, among other things, “general moral principles” and “agreement on a specific application of scientific knowledge.”⁶⁵ As such, Goldstein and Keohane are not interested in what created these ideas and beliefs but rather in their effects on (foreign) policy-making.

Therefore, although there could be a relationship between identity and ideas, the emphasis is given on the identification of the beliefs – which can be

⁶² It is worth noting that there is a great variety of understandings of ideas and identities related to approaches such as critical theory, post-structuralism, post-positivism, etc. Here, the aim is not to provide a holistic overview of this debate but rather to focus on the identity/ideas understandings most prevalent in Turkish foreign policy literature. That would help to incorporate these elements into the theoretical framework.

⁶³ Daniele Conversi, "Ideology and Nationalism," in *Routledge Handbook of Ethnic Conflict*, ed. Karl Cordell and Stefan Wolff (New York: Routledge, 2011), 27; For a review of the history of the term "ideology" see, Emmet Kennedy, "'Ideology' from Destutt De Tracy to Marx," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40, no. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1979): 353-68.

⁶⁴ Conversi, "Ideology and Nationalism," 27.

⁶⁵ Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework," in *Ideas & Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, ed. Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 7.

done through a number of methods – and their impact on policy outcomes.⁶⁶ Likewise, authors who deal with foreign policy, and in this case, TFP could treat ideology in either way: a) like a product of identities (thus acknowledging identity as a policy-making factor); or like a (“ahistorical”) factor that directly impacts policy-making.

In the debate about TFP under the AKP, the issue of identity and ideology in particular is salient. For example, one of the arguments holds that the policy of neo-Ottomanism is a process of “re-Islamization” which “is accompanied with another process: ‘re-Ottomanization’[;] [a]nd that in the case of Turkey Islamization is proceeding on according to the Ottoman tradition.”⁶⁷ This interpretation of neo-Ottomanism contrasts previously presented, more liberal interpretations, and could easily be associated with primordial understandings of (religious and imperial/national) identity which inform and shape ideologies.

Yet, neo-Ottomanism has also been characterised as an “expansionist policy in new terms, namely a combination of economic, military and geopolitical power, which uses both Islam and the strategic partnership with the West as its two pillars.”⁶⁸ Although this is a realist interpretation of neo-Ottomanism the difference of opinion about the role of identity is clear. Moreover there are also scholars who do see the Islamist rhetoric, and thus the

⁶⁶ Ibid., 7-8, 26-29.

⁶⁷ Stefanos Constantinides, "Turkey: The Emergence of a New-Foreign Policy, The Neo-Ottoman Imperial Model," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 24(1996): 324.

⁶⁸ Giorgos Karampelias, "Εισαγωγή [Introduction]," in *Νέο-Οθωμανισμός και Ελληνική Ταυτότητα*, ed. Giorgos Karampelias (Athens: Enallaktikes Ekdoseis, 2009), 7.

instrumentalisation of Islamic identity, as an “ideological cover up and a communicative instrument for the legitimisation of [Turkey’s democratisation and liberalisation] choices both domestically and abroad.”⁶⁹ In addition, given that according to realists “the public largely defers to or is readily manipulated by” power maximisation seeking elites, it becomes clear how the instrumentalist approach can be applied to realist explanations as well.⁷⁰

More such *Innepolitik* explanations of TFP with particular reference to ideology can be found in texts by authors like Svante Cornell and Söner Çağaptay. Cornell, for example, thoroughly looks at the writings, speeches and worldview of Turkish Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, and Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, arguing that both politicians have strong ideological incentives and that, since they have great influence over policy-making, TFP is largely ideologically driven. More specifically, he writes that Turkey’s “impulses are likely to continue to have policy consequences as Turkish leaders will interpret events from a distinctively different – Islamically-tinged – viewpoint than their Western counterparts.”⁷¹

Cornell’s approach is more similar to the one suggested by Goldstein and Keohane; that is, ideology is explored, identified, and treated as a factor that directly impacts policy-making, without its roots being questioned. In the same

⁶⁹ Dimitrios Triantafyllou and Eleni Fotiou, *Τουρκική Εξωτερική Πολιτική την Εποχή του ΑΚΡ. Προς μια PAX OTTOMANA*; [Turkish Foreign Policy in the AKP Era. Towards a PAX OTTOMANA?] (Athens: Papazisis, 2010). 300.

⁷⁰ Raymond Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2003). 141-42.

⁷¹ Svante E. Cornell, “What Drives Turkish Foreign Policy?,” *Middle East Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (Winter, 2012): 19-21, 24.

spirit, Çağaptay argues that “the AKP has focused its energy on the Middle East, with a slant toward Islamist and anti-Western actors” while on a different occasion he wrote that TFP “transition is feeding into new and powerful political sentiments in the form of Muslim nationalism, with many Turks concluding – in line with the AKP’s arguments – that their interests lie with other Muslim-majority countries.”⁷²

While both authors talk about ideology (either Islamism or Muslim nationalism), one can easily trace the connection between Islamist ideology and Islamic or Muslim identity. The implication is that (Islamic) identity and ideology have an impact on policy outcomes. Thus, the *texts* in question could be called orientalist, due to the essentialist distinction they make between East and West, and could better be associated with primordial understandings of identity. Further, as regards the Innepolitik character of these approaches, it is noteworthy that especially Cornell, despite his brief mention of systemic and economic factors, mainly pays attention to the perceptions of the policy makers, which is an element that largely differentiates systemic and Innepolitik theories since the latter emphasise, for the most part, different agents (e.g. policy-makers, political leaders, etc.).⁷³

⁷² Söner Çağaptay, "Turkey's Flip," *Hürriyet Daily News*(11/11/2001), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey8217s-flip-2009-11-11>; Söner Çağaptay, "Secularism and Foreign Policy in Turkey: New Elections, Troubling Trends," in *Policy Focus* (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April, 2007), vii.

⁷³ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998): 146, 48; see also an account of contemporary foreign policy analysis theories that pay particular attention to domestic factors in Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: Classic and Contemporary Theory* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); and Marijke Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative Introduction* (New York: Palgrave, 2007). 27-31.

Like-minded scholars see “a profound shift in Turkish foreign policy,” arguing that Turkey’s movements are consistent with a plan for a more autonomous role which, as seen earlier, is largely driven from ideological incentives.⁷⁴ Thus, the AKP government is often referred to as “Islamist” while it has been argued that “Ankara's dramatic policy transformation seems inconsistent with the fundamental values that underpin the alliance” of NATO.⁷⁵ Within this context Turkey’s decision not to let American troops into Iraq through its territories, in 2003, its opposition to the US idea for Iraq’s division, the deterioration in Turkish-Israeli relations and the improved relations between Turkey and Muslim states, are often seen as evidence of anti-Western behaviour.⁷⁶ The same scholars see, for example, Erdoğan’s 2011 speech in Kuwait, where he was celebrated as the ultimate Islamic leader of his time, as proof of Ankara’s ideological foreign policy orientation, or what has been called “Islamist causes.”⁷⁷ This is not very different from the orientalist argument that “Culture, Muslim identity, and affinity with the global Muslim *ummah* (global community) affect the AKP’s world view” and its foreign policies.⁷⁸

Generally, whereas Innepolitik/domestic-level analytical approaches to TFP can often overlap with the systemic/structural ones in terms of their

⁷⁴ Rubin, "Shifting Sides? The Problems of Neo-Ottomanism."

⁷⁵ David Schenker, "A NATO Without Turkey? Ankara’s Islamist Government is Turning Away from the Western Alliance," *The Wall Street Journal* 05/11/2009.

⁷⁶ Henri Barkey, "Turkey Emerges as Middle East Leader," *CNN* 03/06/2010.

⁷⁷ Mehmet E. Biresselioglu, "Turkey’s Transforming Relations with the Arab World: The Impact of Recent Turkish High-Level Visits to the Gulf Region," *Balkananalysis.com* 27/01/2011; Sally McNamara, Ariel Cohen, and James Phillips, "Countering Turkey's Strategic Shift," *Backgrounders, The Heritage Foundation*, no. 2442 (July 26, 2010): 17.

⁷⁸ McNamara, Cohen, and Phillips, "Countering Turkey's Strategic Shift," 2.

positivist epistemologies, they diverge significantly in ontological terms and sometimes in their epistemological approach as well. As such, both approaches, apart from few exceptions, often take into account only some of the realities of TFP.

Some Innepolitik explanations, not in general but with particular regard to TFP under the AKP, miss the pragmatic incentives behind much of Ankara's liberal and commercial foreign policies as well as the actual domestic democratic improvements by focusing on identity, ideology and policy-makers perceptions. Alternatively, they often focus on liberalist and political economic institutionalist explanations thus neglecting important ideational factors. Conversely, structural approaches disregard domestic level factors that could be important in foreign policy making, while structural realist or liberal approaches that see identity as instrumental rarely take into account the pacifist or power maximization policies of Turkey, respectively. That is to say that, one-dimensional analyses could be easily challenged.

It is evident that there is a long debate and a large body of literature on the character of TFP – and only a small part of it has been reviewed here. As far as TFP under the AKP is concerned, apart from a few isolated efforts to find the middle ground between the different approaches, the literature has been mainly dominated by explanations that lack a coherent multidimensional and multileveled analysis. Yet in the last few years, not least because of the developments in 2010 and 2011 (Arab Uprisings, etc.), a new debate has been provoked about the methodology of analysis and the so called “new wave” of

TFP, which could constitute the basis for a better understanding of TFP under the AKP.

In this light the efforts of this study are aimed at synthesizing systemic and domestic accounts, since such a task would provide a more complex and potentially more accurate picture. At the same time, this thesis remains a contribution to the positivist literature, as explained below, and the causal role of ideology is accounted for through a primarily instrumentalist reading of identity.

2.3. The “Third Way” – Integrating System-Level and Innepolitik Approaches

Theoretically the agent-structure question in IR and FPA is not new and it is in many ways related to the levels-of-analysis problem.⁷⁹ While structural, and particularly realist, approaches were the mainstream ones in IR scholarship during the Cold War, other theories and domestic level factors acquired more attention later on leading to the intensification of the debate about the relationship and interaction between the unit (state) and system (international) level.

⁷⁹ For the level-of-analysis problem see, Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); and David J. Singer, "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations," *World Politics* 14, no. 1 (1961): 77-92; for the agency-structure question see, Walter Carlsnaes, "The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign Policy Analysis," *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (September, 1992): 245-70; Fearon, "Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations," 289-313; David L. Rousseau et al., "Democratic Leaders and War: Simultaneously Managing External Conflicts and Domestic Politics," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 66, no. 3 (June, 2012): 349-64; and Charles Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (March, 1990): 3-21.

As it has been demonstrated thus far, both structural and domestic-level approaches to the analysis of TFP have strong proponents. In Turkey, the rise of AKP was what intensified the discussion about the role of agency in TFP.⁸⁰ That of course led to all the previously reviewed Innepolitik explanations and other systemic explanations that, among other things, do not neglect the ideological roots of the party. Unavoidably the debate also led to the gradual synthesis of different levels of analysis – what can be called the “third way” – with some authors trying to open the “black box” of the state and come up with ways of decoding the complexity of TFP.

From a constructivist-culturalist perspective (i.e. strategic culture), for example, Mufti looks at how cultural factors play a role in shaping foreign and security policy as well as how culturally based foreign and security policy paradigms – namely, strategic culture paradigms – could be constructed for instrumental purposes. This mostly Innepolitik approach was selected by Mufti because, as he writes, “the dynamics of Turkish security policy during the past two decades cannot be explained adequately by external systemic pressures.”⁸¹ In this context he writes “that established security paradigms... have to resonate at least as robustly with the polity’s particular historical and cultural heritage.”⁸²

⁸⁰ Meliha B. Altunışık and Lenore G. Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 4 (2011).

⁸¹ Mufti, *Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea*: 2.

⁸² Ibid., 5, 84.

In addition to the structural analysis, he adopts what has been called by Alastair I. Johnston, "Third Generation Strategic Culture" theory.⁸³ Strategic culture theorists are often referred to as culturalists, as opposed to constructivists; however, as Theo Farrell notes, there is significant overlap between the two since both of them examine how norms shape politics.⁸⁴ Yet, culturalists are more interested in how ideational variables shape state behaviour while constructivists – specifically the neoclassical/thin ones – are more interested in interstate relations and the international system. Because of the significant overlap between them and the fact that some strategic culture theorists are often called constructivists, the category/strand of constructivism that would fit them best would be the broad category of "conventional constructivists" rather than the one of "critical constructivists." The former maintains a positivist epistemology and seeks to communicate with rationalist approaches while the latter maintains an interpretivist epistemology.⁸⁵

As part of the same approach, Ali Karaosmanoğlu, while taking into account structural factors, argues that Turkish security culture "has been shaped by the accumulation of historical experiences and interpenetration of diverse kinds of discourses." He also explains that in the post-Cold war period, "Turkey's non-Western cultural and political peculiarities that came to the fore"

⁸³ Ibid., 3-4; Alastair I. Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (Spring, 1995): 41-64.

⁸⁴ Farrell, "Constructivist Security Studies," 49-72.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Further categorisation of Constructivism has been made from Adler, building on Cecelia Lynch and Audie Klotz, who holds that there can be identified four groups within Constructivism: "modernist", "rule-based", "narrative knowing", and "postmodernist", see, Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1997): 335-36.

have been moderated by its “soft power” and “Kantian” orientation, although there are still some remaining elements of power politics.⁸⁶

Further to the external systemic international environment, Mufti and Karaosmanoğlu, try to analyse the Turkish domestic political scene. However, as both authors note, they deal primarily with security issues (i.e. security/strategic culture), thus not paying enough attention to other aspects of foreign policy (e.g. economic). Moreover, the focus on culture and norms, while very valuable, could lead to false or inaccurate generalisations about (political or strategic) culture by the labelling of the different culture “paradigms” (i.e. imperial, republican) within Turkey. It would be helpful if other analytical tools, beyond norms, identity, or culture, were used as well. Yet, it is noteworthy that the studies of Mufti and Karaosmanoğlu do not focus exclusively on TFP under the AKP and thus their historical cultural approach was perhaps appropriate for their purposes.

Recent alterations in the regional balance of power of the greater Middle East have given this very debate about agency and structure another push forward. The seismic events of the “Arab Spring” that dominated 2011, as well as other developments in the Middle East and its immediate neighbourhood such as the escalation of the crisis over Iran’s nuclear programme, the intensification of the transnational Kurdish problem, and the Mediterranean

⁸⁶ Ali L. Karaosmanoğlu, “Turkish Security Culture: Evolutionary or Carved in a Stone,” in *Perceptions and Misperceptions in the EU and Turkey: Stumbling Blocks on the Road to Accession*, ed. Peter M. E. Volten (Groningen, The Netherlands: CESS, 2009), 28, 41, 44.

crisis over Cypriot natural gas, arguably signified an altered security environment.⁸⁷

On the one hand, it has been argued that Turkey's "new appetite for confrontation" as well as "the AKP's self-aggrandisement and threats of force – mainly towards Israel and Cyprus –" were influenced by the developments of the "Arab Spring" and the confidence that Turkey acquired from its on-going religious and soft power engagement with the countries of the Middle East.⁸⁸ On the other hand, Şaban Kardaş, for example, while acknowledging that the "Arab Spring" challenged Turkish foreign and security policy, argues that Turkey's response to the Arab uprisings, especially in the case of Libya, "is pragmatism *par excellence*, and reflects the ability to follow dictates of *Realpolitik* in difficult times."⁸⁹

Admittedly, a structural explanation of post-Arab Spring TFP would be justifiable and it is within this context that Ian Lesser suggests that "Turkey may be entering a 'third wave' in the evolution of its modern foreign policy" which signifies a shift from foreign commercial activity to security considerations.⁹⁰ However, as Kardaş warns, while structural factors are important in understanding foreign policy, "one has to be careful to avoid

⁸⁷ Tulay Karadeniz, "Turkey 'Can't Stand By' if Syria Threatens Security," *Reuters* 09/12/2011; Cem Barber, "Turkey Threatens Naval Action over Cyprus Drilling," *Famagusta Gazette* (2011), <http://famagusta-gazette.com/turkey-threatens-naval-action-over-cyprus-drilling-p12883-69.htm>; Sebnem Arsu, "Amid Tensions With Israel, Turkey Threatens Increased Naval Presence," *The New York Times* 06/09/2011.

⁸⁸ IISS, "Arab Awakening Boosts Turkey's Confidence," in *IISS Strategic Comments*, ed. Alexander Nicoll (The International Institute For Strategic Studies, Oct. 2011), 1-3.

⁸⁹ Şaban Kardaş, "Turkey's Middle East Policy Reloaded: Rise of Pragmatism?," in *On Turkey* (The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 10/10/2011), 2-4.

⁹⁰ Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey's Third Wave - And the Coming Quest for Strategic Reassurance," *The German Marshall Fund of the United States* (2011): 1, 3.

falling into the trap of structural determinism and downplaying the role of agency.”⁹¹ Özel mitigates the two positions by pointing out that although agents do indeed try to shape their environment, at the same time, “they are circumscribed by their capacities, by other actors’ relative power, and the conditions created by major shifts in that environment.”⁹²

While in agency-structure integrated approaches the structural analysis remains largely based on neorealism, the domestic level variables of analysis, or foreign policy determinants, vary. In their effort to identify the determinants of change in the AKP Middle East foreign policy, Meliha Altunışık and Lenore Martin, suggest that, apart from external factors, three domestic developments played an important role: 1) the rise of the AKP; 2) “the political transformation of Turkey;” and 3) the liberalisation of the Turkish economy.⁹³ In a different context the domestic change determinants of Altunışık and Martin could have been domestic level variables of a broader analysis of TFP. That is because through them the authors engage with issues such as AKP ideology, political reforms and the development of the Turkish political system, as well as with economic issues, which means that together with structural external factors they provide a comprehensive, multileveled and multidimensional analysis.

Provided that, as the review of the literature has shown so far, systemic or Innepolitik approaches are inadequate to analyse TFP by themselves, then a synthesis of the two needs to be sought. It is true that Innepolitik approaches

⁹¹ Saban Kardas, "Quest for Strategic Autonomy Continues, or How to Make Sense of Turkey's "New Wave", in *On Turkey* (The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 28/11/2011), 1-2.

⁹² Özel, "Waves, Ways and Historical Turns: Turkey's Strategic Quest," 2.

⁹³ Altunışık and Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP," 577.

mostly pay attention to a very tangible reality which is the increasing eastward orientation of Turkey, as well as the salient ideological features of TFP – at least at the rhetorical level. This is not to say that system-level approaches are wrong or that Turkey has not indeed pragmatic, either liberal (economic) or realist (power), benefits from this shift. Neither is it to say that this might not be a “bargaining chip” that Turkey uses in its relations with the West. On the other hand, Turkey’s actions, especially since the Arab uprisings broke out and escalated in 2011, have been reaffirming some of the arguments of the authors who argue that TFP is indeed shifting. Yet, whether or not this shift – if that is the case – in Ankara’s policy is driven by ideological or pragmatic dynamics – or both – is still not clear.

What does become clear is the increasing need to take into account both the structural external environment and the domestic policy-making dynamics of Turkey in the analysis of its foreign policy. In one such approach, and perhaps the most comprehensive and complete work on Turkish-Syrian relations, Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem Tür, draw significant conclusions with regard to the role of material, ideational, domestic, and systemic drivers as well as the relationship between regional powers and the global hegemon. They acknowledge the role of both the system and unit levels, and they pay particular attention to identity while arguing that “*elite learning and elite change* are arguably decisive for alignment change” in the case of Turkey-Syria

relations; thus despite the integrative approach, their focus is on the domestic level.⁹⁴

Although important for the understanding of Turkish-Syrian relations, the foreign policies of these two countries and the different drivers that shape them, the establishment of clear causal chains was not among the goals of the edited volume. Therefore, while the identification of the domestic, external, ideational and material drivers is key, this thesis seeks to go beyond that. It also seeks to determine the causal relationship between the drivers that lead to a certain foreign policy outcome and Turkey's overall foreign policy behaviour under the AKP.

In this light, and in line with the logic of approaches taken by Hinnebusch and TÜR, ÖZEL, and Altunışık and Martin, the need for the development of an NcR framework which pays attention to both the unit and system levels, becomes clear. A similar NcR framework was adopted by Emre İŞERİ and Oğuz DİLEK in explaining TFP towards the Caucasus. İŞERİ and DİLEK's paper factored in both the system level and domestic factors, such as the perceptions of political leaders which, as far as this author is aware, was the first usage of NcR for TFP.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem TÜR, "Conclusion," in *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem TÜR (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 219, 06-23; See also, Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*; Raymond Hinnebusch, "Introduction: Analytical Framework," in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 1-27.

⁹⁵ Emre İŞERİ and Oğuz DİLEK, "The Limitations of Turkey's New Foreign Policy Activism in the Caucasian Regional Security Complexity," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 1 (2011): 43-45.

The second usage which is also more relevant to this thesis' framework given its focus on the Middle East, is Ahmet Han's work on Turkish-Syrian relations. Han recognizes the importance of ideas in TFP-making and thus sets the AKP worldviews as an intervening variable between the effects of the systemic environment and foreign policy behaviour.⁹⁶ As analysed in the next chapter, this thesis proposes that a distinction should be made between the worldviews of the party as a whole and its elites, proposing an intervening variable based on *AKP elite ideology* – a distinction that differentiates this thesis from existing studies. Yet it is here argued that ideology is not enough in understanding TFP and that *domestic interest groups* should have the role of a second intervening variable. Thereby both ideational and pragmatic drivers of TFP can be accounted for in relation to the external and domestic environment. This is another particularity of this thesis' theoretical framework which, together with the establishment of specific causal chains as noted earlier, has not been found in existing literature.

2.4. Conclusion

Through the review of the literature on TFP it has been observed that most works adopt an either system or domestic-level approach while there is also a gap between the examination of material and ideation factors in TFP as well as between security and economic policies. However, a relatively new body of

⁹⁶ Ahmet K. Han, "Paradise Lost: A Neoclassical Realist Analysis of Turkish Foreign Policy and the Case of Turkish-Syrian Relations," in *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch
Özlem Tür (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 55-60.

literature on TFP under the AKP has emerged which has made significant efforts to fill these gaps. Among such works are those that employ an NcR approach. To the end of contributing to this new body of literature, this thesis seeks to develop a new NcR framework by building on and refining the already existing integrating and NcR frameworks.

The next chapter develops the research design, sets the research objectives, and develops its own theoretically informed framework based on NcR. Ultimately, the added value this framework provides over other works is not only the synthesis of levels of analysis or the effort to incorporate ideational factors and material (security and economy) ones. It is also the attribution of specific causal significance to each foreign policy driver which will ultimately enable the identification of TFP behaviour. At the same time it constitutes an effort to systematise the analysis of TFP, develop the already existing NcR approaches in this domain, and provide a more comprehensive and extended explanation and research agenda.

3. Methodology and Theoretical Framework

3.1. Research Design and Objectives

The objective of this thesis is to explain TFP (towards the Middle East) under the AKP. More specifically, the overarching question to be answered is “what are the foreign policy-making dynamics under the AKP?” The goal is to trace the causal relationship between the (independent and intervening) variables vis-à-vis the dependent variable in terms of the foreign policy outcomes of “revisionism” and “status quo” behaviour as elaborated below. The argument is that systemic drivers are primary in bringing about change in TFP. However the character of the changes, namely, the ways in which Turkey responds to systemic pressures depends on domestic drivers and, most importantly, the ideology of policy-makers.

This is to be achieved through looking at both Turkish security and economic policies towards two countries of the Middle East in comparative perspective – Syria and Israel. As argued above, the thesis will make a significant contribution to the literature in trying to mitigate – not necessarily combine – contradictory or non-sufficient explanations of TFP made by various theoretical approaches and provide answers about TFP behaviour and drivers. At the same time it will attempt an empirical contribution that would not only help refine some aspects of the employed theoretical framework but also help

towards providing an enhanced explanation of the TFP phenomenon under the AKP – at least regarding the Middle East.

Alexander George and Andrew Bennett suggest five questions to be addressed for determining the research objectives. Such questions regard the kind of phenomenon or behaviour to be examined, the type of explanation to be made about the phenomenon in question, the theoretical framework to be employed, the specific aspects of the theory to be “singled out for testing, refinement, or elaboration,” and the relationship between the research objective and the employed theoretical framework.⁹⁷ The following points aim at addressing George and Bennett’s questions thus highlighting the research objectives of the thesis as well as the selection of theory and methodology:

- The phenomenon to be examined is TFP toward the Middle East under the AKP – through the analysis of its driving dynamics – and this is the class of events of which the cases will be instances.
- The phenomenon [TFP under the AKP] is not thought to be an empirical universal. The goal is to explain an observable variation in the dependent variable (foreign policy outcome): revisionism or status quo (foreign policy) behaviour.
- NcR will be used as the theoretical framework. Rival theories do exist with regard to the explanation of TFP under the AKP, as already presented, while NcR is considered to be an effective “middle ground” or “third way”.

⁹⁷ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2005). 77.

- The intervening variables of the Neoclassical Realist theoretical framework are singled out for refinement and elaboration.
- The theoretical framework, after the elaboration of the way the intervening variables are utilised, is sufficiently specified and operationalised to assess causal effects. But predictions cannot be specific, rather probabilistic given the dynamic nature of the phenomenon in question, as well as the greater degree of complexity rather than parsimony which is sought in the analysis.⁹⁸

Having addressed the research objectives it can be said that the research design of this thesis seeks to “accomplish more than one purpose,” that is, “heuristic and theory testing.”⁹⁹ In this instance, theory testing refers to the thesis as a case of implementing NcR and enriching the literature regarding the operationalisation of its variables – since it is a rather underexplored theory.

In what follows, this chapter develops an NcR theoretical framework by building on existing (neo)realist and NcR literature and by explaining and elaborating on the independent, the intervening, as well as the dependent variables. Then, it addresses the research methodology and the employed methods that complement the theoretical framework. These include case study and comparative methodologies which will ultimately allow for more generalizable conclusions to be drawn.

⁹⁸ Robert O. Keohane, "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond," in *Neorealism and its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 187-88.

⁹⁹ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. 76.

3.2. A Neoclassical Realist Framework for Turkish Foreign Policy

A theory of foreign policy should “seek to explain what states try to achieve in the external realm and when they try to achieve it.”¹⁰⁰ Having that in mind, NcR is employed as the ideal analytical framework because of its theoretical flexibility and its “clear guidelines for... achieving greater richness and fit.” Moreover, it is considered as ideal because of its emphasis on the relationship between the system and unit level as well as its “theoretically informed” explanations about how international relative material power changes are filtered by political decision makers.¹⁰¹ Overall, NcR draws upon classical realism and neorealism as well as Innepolitik theories.

Given that “foreign policy is driven by both internal and external factors,”¹⁰² Kenneth Waltz explains that his theory of neorealism, as an international politics theory, “cannot be made sufficient, for the making of unambiguous foreign-policy predictions,” “because international-political theory can explain states’ behaviour only when external pressures dominate the internal disposition of states, which seldom happens.”¹⁰³ Other theories, i.e. Innepolitik, or strands of realism, like offensive realism, challenge this line of argument. Whereas the latter argues that structural factors are dominant in explaining foreign policy, the former stresses that “foreign policy is better

¹⁰⁰ Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” 145.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 168.

¹⁰² Ibid., 145.

¹⁰³ Kenneth N. Waltz, “International Politics is not Foreign Policy,” *Security Studies* 6, no. 1 (Autumn, 1996): 57.

understood as the product of a country's internal dynamics" such as ideology, culture, individual and group political psychology, and the political system.¹⁰⁴

Despite common assumptions among the different strands of realism, classical realism's emphasis on the role that human nature plays in shaping society and politics could, to a certain extent, be seen as an Innepolitik approach.¹⁰⁵ The "democratic peace" concept of liberal theory is also in many ways an Innepolitik understanding of foreign policy since it holds that the political system (democracy) of a state determines its behaviour.¹⁰⁶ Other approaches within the discipline of FPA hold that what matters the most is neither the system nor the state level but the individual level and ultimately the decision-making of the leaders. From that perspective, FPA seeks to explain "how and why" bad foreign policy decisions "come about."¹⁰⁷ In line with such Innepolitik approaches constructivism, although not so much focused on the individual, takes into account ideas and norms and explains how they affect the actions of policy-makers in pursuing aims which are often referred to as non-rationalist.¹⁰⁸

As pure structural analysis is not sufficient to explain foreign policy, neither can Innepolitik approaches by themselves adequately understand it.

¹⁰⁴ Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 146, 48; see also an account of contemporary foreign policy analysis theories that pay particular attention to domestic factors in Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis*: 37-143.

¹⁰⁵ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Brief ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1993). 4.

¹⁰⁶ Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 148; see also Jack S. Levy, "Domestic Politics and War," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (1988): 658-73.

¹⁰⁷ Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis*: 164.

¹⁰⁸ Jackson and Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations*: 162; Farrell, "Constructivist Security Studies," 50.

Structural neorealist analysis as explained above can merely explain patterns of outcomes of international interaction while “a theory of foreign policy limited to systemic factors alone is bound to be inaccurate much of the time.”¹⁰⁹ On the other hand Innepolitik approaches, which maintain that it is primarily domestic processes that affect foreign policy, are unable to explain “why states with similar domestic systems often act differently... and why dissimilar states in similar situations often act alike.”¹¹⁰ Moreover, given that the international system constraints in one way or the other the choices of a state’s domestic groups, the internal dynamics of a state do not play as important a role as Innepolitik theories assume.¹¹¹

In this light, when Innepolitik approaches to TFP overemphasise factors like institutionalised change, political systems, ideology, identity, culture and perceptions, they tend to “miss the wood for the trees” while they often fail to identify structurally informed foreign policy decisions or evaluate the relevance of the relationship between the external environment and the domestic political scene with regard to the foreign policy outcome.¹¹² On the other hand, realist or other structural explanations neglect, more often than not, the role of domestic

¹⁰⁹ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, and Norrin M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, and Norrin M. Ripsman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 19; Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 152.

¹¹⁰ Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, "Conclusion: The State of Neoclassical Realism," 291; Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 148.

¹¹¹ Norrin M. Ripsman, "Neoclassical Realism and Domestic Interest Groups," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, and Norrin M. Ripsman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 192.

¹¹² Triantafyllou and Fotiou, *Τουρκική Εξωτερική Πολιτική την Εποχή του ΑΚΡ. Προς μια PAX OTTOMANA*; : 300-01; Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, *Trials of Europeanization: Turkish Political Culture and the European Union* (New York: Palgrave, 2011).

politics and how structural changes or shifts in international relative material power are filtered by domestic actors or groups.

It is thus evident that most of the attention has been given to both structural and domestic factors that affect foreign policy, separately; but given that a state acts within an international system and that "Foreign policy choices are made by actual political leaders and elites," it is important, as Waltz said, to take into account both structural and domestic factors when analysing a state's foreign policy.¹¹³ NcR does exactly that in a systematic way by adopting the structural analysis of neorealism on the one hand, and by "introduc[ing] domestic-level intervening variables that act as filters between the independent (relative power) and dependent variables (foreign policy outcome)," on the other.¹¹⁴ In this context the independent variable could be further described as the effect of the external security (geopolitical) environment of a state at a particular time period,¹¹⁵ "usually operationalized by its polarity."¹¹⁶ Yet neoclassical realists have used more intervening variables in their analyses such as "threat perception," "diplomatic leverage," "economic interdependence," "alliance resolve," "offense/defence balance" and "geography".¹¹⁷

This thesis employs three independent variables: changes in international relative power, external threat perceptions, and international economic

¹¹³ Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 147.

¹¹⁴ Thomas Juneau, "Neoclassical Realist Strategic Analysis: A Statement," in *European Consortium on Political Research Graduate Student Conference* (Dublin, Ireland Aug. 30 - Sep. 01, 2010), 1.

¹¹⁵ Taliaferro, "Neoclassical Realism and Resource Extraction: State Building for Future War," 211.

¹¹⁶ Juneau, "Neoclassical Realist Strategic Analysis: A Statement," 11.

¹¹⁷ Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). 37-38; Yew Meng Lai, "Nationalism and Power Politics in Japan's Relations with China: A Neoclassical Realist Interpretation" (University of Warwick, 2008), 61; Taliaferro, "Neoclassical Realism and Resource Extraction: State Building for Future War," 214.

interdependence. The intervening variables, as elaborated below, are *AKP Elite Ideology* and *Domestic Interest Groups*. As far as the dependent variable is concerned it is defined as the various responses, behaviour, or strategies of a state vis-à-vis its external environment. Jeffrey Taliaferro wrote that for his study the dependent variable was “the variation in the types of intensity of the adaptive strategies the state will pursue: emulation, innovation, or persistence in existing strategies.”¹¹⁸ For this study, the dependent variable will be the variation in the foreign policy behaviour of Turkey with regard to *revisionism* and *status quo*, along with the subcategories that these two entail (see below).¹¹⁹

Just like other strands of realism, NcR has its own assumptions many of which are based either on classical or offensive (neo)realism.¹²⁰ For example, NcR sees the “conflict group”¹²¹ as the “fundamental unit of social and political affairs” and accepts that the state is the primary conflict group;¹²² as Waltz put it, “states set the scene[;] ... states... set the terms of the intercourse[;] ... [and] states remake the rules by which actors operate.”¹²³ Juneau notes that this

¹¹⁸ Taliaferro, "Neoclassical Realism and Resource Extraction: State Building for Future War," 213-14.

¹¹⁹ This approach builds both upon Taliaferro (2009) and Lai, "Nationalism and Power Politics in Japan's Relations with China: A Neoclassical Realist Interpretation," 60-61; see also, Yew Meng Lai, *Nationalism and Power Politics in Japan's Relations with China: A Neoclassical Realist Interpretation* (Routledge, 2013 (forthcoming)).

¹²⁰ See, for example, Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*: 4-16; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, Inc., 2010). 123-28; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Powers* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003). 32-36.

¹²¹ Dahrendorf quoted in Robert G. Gilpin, "No One Loves a Political Realist," in *Realism: Restatements and Renewal*, ed. Benjamin Frankel (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 7.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 94.

statement “does not preclude opening the black-box of the state in the analysis of foreign policy,” as NcR does.¹²⁴

The second fundamental assumption is that the international system is anarchic and therefore inherently conflictual; “In the absence of a supreme authority, there is then constant possibility that conflicts will be settled by force,” writes Waltz.¹²⁵ Nonetheless, NcR “view[s] conflict in terms of probability not possibility” thus accepting that “states can focus on matters other than security.” From that perspective NcR goes beyond the structural realist focus on states’ self-help.¹²⁶

Another NcR assumption is that the place of a state in the international system, and thus its relative power within it, is the independent variable that determines its behaviour.¹²⁷ However, neoclassical realists, in line with their more flexible approach, argue that apart from power, other domestic level factors play a role in shaping state behaviour such as “politico-military institutions... as well as nationalism and ideology.”¹²⁸ Moreover, neoclassical realists, although they acknowledge the role of power, argue that states may pursue more than one end, instead of mere power maximisation or security.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Juneau, “Neoclassical Realist Strategic Analysis: A Statement,” 5.

¹²⁵ Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*: 188; Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Powers*: 30; see also Robert G. Gilpin, “The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism,” in *Neorealism and its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 305.

¹²⁶ Juneau, “Neoclassical Realist Strategic Analysis: A Statement,” 5.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 6; Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, “Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy,” 38.

¹²⁹ Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” 152; Juneau, “Neoclassical Realist Strategic Analysis: A Statement,” 6.

Another assumption has to do with the long debated issue of rationality. Although for some realists rationality is believed to be central to realism, other realists disagree. Waltz, for example, writes that the balance-of-power “theory requires no assumptions of rationality or of constancy of will on the part of all of the actors.”¹³⁰ Therefore, despite several criticisms of NcR,¹³¹ it does not stray from traditional realist core assumptions. After all, according to the majority of rational choice theorists, no matter how good or bad a decision, “the main requirement of rationality” is “that a decision maker have some purpose in mind and make choices designed to achieve those predetermined ends.”¹³² From that perspective, even though NcR introduces intervening variables at the unit level thus accepting a “confined rationality” of the state, at the same time it maintains that states (their foreign policy executives) do evaluate the costs and benefits in their pursuit of certain goals.¹³³

Within the above framework of NcR there have been identified two main levels of analysis: the system level and the unit level. As already elaborated, NcR uses both levels in its analysis of foreign policy by introducing intervening variables at the unit (state) level that explain how domestic actors translate the relative power changes of the systemic level (external environment). The next to sections further examine the unit and system levels and their different variables. The three system-level independent variables are, international

¹³⁰ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 118.

¹³¹ See for example Jeffrey W. Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, "Is Anybody Still a Realist?," *International Security* 24, no. 2 (Fall, 1999).

¹³² (James D. Morrow cited in) Breuning, *Foreign Policy Analysis*: 5-6.

¹³³ Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," 22; Juneau, "Neoclassical Realist Strategic Analysis: A Statement," 6.

power relations, external threat perceptions and international economic interdependence. At the unit level, it is proposed that *AKP Elite Ideology* and *Domestic Interest Groups* are the two appropriate intervening variables for analysing TFP and completing the NcR analytical framework.

3.2.1. The System Level – Independent Variables

In a continuation of the above-developed NcR framework, the system level and the independent variables are first looked at before moving to the unit level and the two intervening variables which are employed for the analysis of TFP.

International Power Changes. The first independent variable regards the power structure of the international system and the nature of the system itself. As Waltz argues, “A system is composed of a structure and of interacting units. The structure is the system-wide component that makes it possible to think of the system as a whole.”¹³⁴ The primary difference between a domestic and an international political system lies in the arrangement of its parts. Domestic political systems are centralised and hierarchical. In contrast, international political systems are decentralised and anarchic.¹³⁵ As John Mearsheimer puts it, anarchy is “an ordering principle, which says that the system comprises independent states that have no central authority above them.”¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 79.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 88.

¹³⁶ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Powers*: 30.

Within this framework, neorealism sees states as unitary actors that have the same functionality and are distinguished on the basis of their (material) power capabilities in relation to other states. That is, the distribution of power in the international system.¹³⁷ By extension, structural changes come about when changes in the distribution of power occur. From this follows the balance-of-power theory which is central to neorealism and NcR. Each state behaves according to its goals and capabilities. In turn, the actions and interactions of the units produce a system which gives rise to constraints and leads to balances of power.¹³⁸ Due to systemic constraints it is easy to see how “motives and outcomes may well be disjoined” as “Structures cause actions to have consequences they were not intended to have.”¹³⁹

NcR accepts this fundamental premise of neorealism as an independent variable, that is, a variable that has a primary role in shaping a state’s foreign policy, albeit with the intervening role of domestic factors. In Waltz’s words, “The structure of a system changes with changes in the distribution of capabilities across the system’s units. And changes in structure change expectations about how the units of the system will behave and about the outcomes their interactions will produce.”¹⁴⁰ With regards to the change in the distribution of power a synthesis of neorealist and NcR approaches is employed and is argued that it could be caused by: the increase or decrease of a state’s material (e.g. economic, military, demographic, natural resources) capabilities;

¹³⁷ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 97-99.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.

by the formation or dissolution of alliances; as well as by a state's domestic problems that render it unable to mobilise or extract its resources so as to project its power.¹⁴¹

When it comes to this thesis, Turkish foreign policy is examined within the framework of two different systemic power structures. The first is argued to be created by primarily by the 2003 Iraq war and everything that it entailed (see, chapter 4). The second one came about in 2011, primarily with the outbreak of the Arab Uprisings and the withdrawal of the US troops from Iraq. It is argued that in the first instance, Turkey's relative military and economic power position changed as it was outweighed by the US presence in Iraq; a state which, not insignificantly, pursued goals contradicting to those of Turkey and was supported by other regional states such as Israel. Among other things, this situation also gave rise to threat perceptions in Turkey (see below for the linkage between power changes and threat perceptions). To deal with the new power and security reality Turkey pursued the formation of alliances with Syria and Iran, the establishment of stronger economic ties with its Arab neighbourhood and the development of better diplomatic and cultural relations with the region. The goal was to upgrade its overall relative power status.

When the Arab Uprisings broke-out and roughly coincided with the completion of the US withdrawal from Iraq, Turkey was again faced with a change regional power structure. Because of regime changes in the countries of

¹⁴¹ David Jablonsky, "National Power," in *The U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues: Theory of War and Strategy (Volume I)*, ed. Jr. J. Boone Bartholomees (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2010), 123-39; Taliaferro, "Neoclassical Realism and Resource Extraction: State Building for Future War," 194-226.

the Arab Uprisings Turkey lost – at least temporarily – many of its economic partners such as Libya, Egypt and Syria. At the same time it lost an important strategic ally, Syria, and had to deal with the fact that Iran gained momentum in Iraq. Turkey's own power capabilities did not change *per se* but because its security and economic ties with the region were significantly damaged and once again was face with new security threats, it had to reconfigure its foreign policy improve its regional relative power position. This led it to better its relations with the US, support Libya, Tunisia and Egypt economically to re-establish strong economic and political relations even as it harshened its stance towards Israel in order to consolidate its appeal to the new regimes of the Arab world (see, chapter 7).

It should be kept in mind that Turkey's movements were always aimed at the greater strategic goal which in accordance with its (revisionist) ideological vision was to attain the status of the regional power and leader (see intervening variable of the AKP ideology in this chapter). This is also the reason behind the change in Turkey's Syria policy (2011) which shifted from amity to enmity, with Turkey pursuing regime change. Amity during the 2000s was convenient for the achievement of Turkey's goals. But the outbreak of the Syrian civil war challenged Turkey's security and foreign policy goals thus prompting it to adopt hard power, as opposed to the soft power of the previous decade, in order to fulfil its ambitions (see, chapter 7).

Lastly, given the existence of three independent variables in the NcR framework, it is maintained that *international power changes* is primary and that

it has a vertical relationship with the two others: external threat perceptions and economic interdependence. This means that changes in the international distribution of power impact a state's external threat perceptions and economic interdependencies, not the other way around. However, it is maintained that economic interdependencies can remain unaffected by international power changes or altered threat perceptions. This is mainly due to the fact that state economies are largely privatised, driven by private interests and business/economic elites and, therefore, to a great extent dissociated from political realities.

External Threat Perceptions. The second independent variable has to do with a state's external threat perceptions. These are not limited to threat perceptions of states alone but include all exogenous (security) threat perceptions that affect foreign policy-making; and thus the usage of "external threat perceptions" rather than "international" threat perceptions.

Fear of others and perceptions of threat are an important part of the discipline of IR and realism more specifically. Hans Morgenthau, for example, makes the case that the fear of hostile alliances, the fear of the dissolution of alliances, and the fear of alliance intentions led to the formation of other alliances and changes in bilateral relations in the years prior to WWI.¹⁴² Later, Waltz argued that "fear of other states" is usually the common interest among

¹⁴² Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*: 79.

states that form alliances; in other words, the "Perception of a common threat."¹⁴³

With specific regard to alliance formation Waltz's neorealism and balance-of-power theory focuses on power capabilities. Although, for example, he sees fear of others as a common interest between allying states, he maintains that balancing and bandwagoning behaviour are based on a state's selection between the weaker and the stronger, respectively. Stephen Walt goes beyond this narrow understanding and adds that threat perceptions, in addition to power, are also central to alliance decisions. He suggests that "It is more accurate to say that states tend to ally with or against the foreign power that poses the greatest threat. For example, states may balance by allying with other strong states if a weaker power is more dangerous for other reasons."¹⁴⁴

Moreover, Walt proposes four factors that give rise to threat perceptions and determine their intensity level: the aggregate power of state poses a threat depending on its level – the greater the power the bigger the posed threat; geographic proximity – the closer a state is to another the bigger the threat, given that power projection "declines with distance;" a state's offensive power/capabilities – geographic proximity or aggregate power do not necessarily entail offensive capabilities; and the aggressive intentions of a state.

¹⁴³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 166.

¹⁴⁴ Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987). 21-22. It is argued that weaker powers may include both state and non-state actors, and this is evident in the case of Turkey, especially when it comes to the Kurdish separatist movement.

That is, either a state's obvious aggressiveness and expansionism or its perceived aggressive intentions by other states play a role in alliance choices.¹⁴⁵

An important addition to Walt's theory is the inclusion of ideology in these calculations; an element which fits well with the NcR framework. Walt acknowledges that such an approach strays from mainstream realist scholarship but he substantiates, as does Morgenthau,¹⁴⁶ that ideology has indeed a role to play for a number of reasons. For example the role of ideology could be seen in a state's protection of principles, in the existence of less fear because of similar ideologies and values between states, in the increase of a regime's legitimacy through its participation in a larger group/movement, and in the mere prescription of alignment by ideology. In the same way, however, ideologies may cause "conflict and dissension" as well.¹⁴⁷

The suggestion to take into account here is that ideology plays a role in a state's threat perceptions, in addition to power relations, geographic proximity, etc. Similar arguments, albeit more identity-based, have been made by other theories and disciplines such as constructivism and political psychology, arguing that "shared identity decreases threat perception" as well as "increases cooperation in economic policy areas."¹⁴⁸ Although the relationship between identity and ideology are explored later on in the context of the intervening variables, it is seen here how threat perceptions are a point where systemic pressures and domestic factors meet. This, of course, is not unlike the

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 22-26.

¹⁴⁶ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*: 199-200.

¹⁴⁷ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*: 33-35.

¹⁴⁸ David L. Rousseau and Rocio Garcia-Retamero, "Identity, Power, and Threat Perception," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 51, no. 5 (2007): 745.

relationship between international economic interdependencies and domestic economic interests, or international power changes and security concerns.

Nonetheless, this thesis is firstly concerned with the systemic role of threat perceptions; that is, with threat perceptions as a product of the power system and the other factors that Walt listed that constrain foreign policy behaviour. At the same time ideology is not neglected but examined as an intervening variable between independent and dependent variables which is affected by and filters these systemic constraints. In that sense, and according to NCR, the system is seen as the primary cause of threat perceptions which are, however, exacerbated or dealt with in certain ways depending on the dominant ideology of the state executive.

Economic Interdependence. The third and last independent variable concerns a state's foreign economic policies and more specifically its economic interdependencies. The employment of such an independent variable in the framework is important for three reasons: the need to go beyond the examination of security policies and concerns by including economic issues in the analysis; the increasing decentralisation of states in the midst of an increasingly globalised world; and the incorporation of issues with which other political economic of neoliberal approaches deal in terms of the analysis of TFP.

The notion of economic interdependence and its importance for the international system and power became especially popularised towards the end of the 1970s with Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye's book *Power and*

Interdependence.¹⁴⁹ The two authors did not challenge the realist premise of anarchy and neither did they suggest that the state has become obsolete. Rather, they argue that systemic reasons such as the fear of nuclear war, popular resistance to wars in poor or weak countries, the negative impact of wars on economic aims, and domestic opposition to the human cost of such endeavours, led countries to more cooperation than conflict. Thus they disagreed with realism in terms of the system's impact on the behaviour of its units – i.e. state behaviour.¹⁵⁰

In this neoliberal vein, Keohane and Nye argue that interdependence entails that the actions of state or non-state actors have costs for other units of the system which, in turn, will respond in an effort to avoid a new reality forced upon them. And they add that,

From the perspective of the international system, the problem is how to generate and maintain a mutually beneficial pattern of cooperation in the face of competing efforts by governments (and nongovernmental actors) to manipulate the system for their own benefit.¹⁵¹

Also important is the fact that they do not maintain that interdependence leads necessarily to cooperation or that "its consequences would automatically be benign in other respects." Instead, they argue "that patterns of interdependence

¹⁴⁹ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977).

¹⁵⁰ Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr., "Power and Interdependence revisited," *International Organization* 41, no. 4 (1987): 727.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 730-31.

and patterns of potential power resources in a given issue-area are closely related-indeed, two sides of a single coin.” And thus they tried to link realist and liberal perspectives together “in an integrated analysis.”¹⁵²

From that perspective, the examination of a state’s economic interdependencies fits well with this thesis’ NcR theoretical framework both in terms of its broader focus that includes security and economic foreign policy-making factors as well as in terms of the different goals that a state may pursue, as elaborated below. More specifically, the main focus is on the (international) trade aspect of (Turkey’s) economic interdependence as it is “one of the most important forms of international economic interdependence between countries.”¹⁵³ Further this thesis is mainly concerned not with Turkey’s economic interdependencies within the framework of international (financial) institutions, but rather with its economic interdependencies with other countries or groups of countries (e.g. EU) and their relationship with Turkish domestic economic interests and foreign policy-making.

Since economic interdependence is seen as an important component of the international system and the distribution of power, in line with Keohane and Nye, it is here understood as being a systemic independent variable as well. However, as explained earlier, a state’s economic interdependencies are not necessarily influenced by changes in the other two intervening variables, nor do they necessarily affect external threat perceptions, as the current global

¹⁵² Ibid., 730.

¹⁵³ Simon Bromley et al., *Making the International: Economic Interdependence and Political Order* (London, Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press & The Open University, 2004). 9.

economic system has led economic dynamics into private hands and therefore to a relative independence from state policies. In the words of Jennifer Sterling-Folker,

...states can perceive each other as security threats despite increased economic interdependence between them, because nationalism and capitalism are not behavioral, analytical, or practical contradictions. Global capitalism has always functioned and will continue to function in a context of national collectives with internal competitive dynamics that make the “interdependent-peace-dividend” a phenomenon in name only.¹⁵⁴

From that perspective, economic interdependence can be parallel to but not related with national threat perceptions or political and security inter-state relations. The analysis proceeds with the unit level and the employed intervening variables.

3.2.2. The Unit Level - Intervening Variables

The method of selecting one or more intervening variables is one of NcR's weaknesses. Certain intervening variables have been explored and it has been argued that “Neoclassical realism... favours the ‘cookie-cutter’ approach, especially in its selection of intervening variables, whereby appropriate explanatory factors are selected from a ‘tool-box’ solely on the basis of the needs of a given case.” However, there is not a specific “list” of intervening

¹⁵⁴ Jennifer Sterling-Folker, "Neoclassical Realism and Identity: Peril Despite Profit Across the Taiwan Strait," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Steven E. Lobell, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Jeffrey W. Taliaferro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 104.

variables.¹⁵⁵ Gideon Rose argues that this is a problem that needs to be addressed while he maintains that it would be helpful to further explore “how various psychological, ideational, and cultural factors may affect how political actors perceive their own and others’ capabilities and how such perceptions are translated into foreign policy.”¹⁵⁶ Yet Thomas Juneau holds that while it is important to be able to identify the most important intervening variables for each case, NcR’s “ambitions at this level are limited: it is willing to accept here a relatively high degree of fluidity and indeterminacy, which must be dealt with empirically.”¹⁵⁷

NcR in its effort to be flexible and adaptable by introducing variables at the unit level has been criticised for been reductionist.¹⁵⁸ This follows a logic similar to that of Waltz who argues that, “Essential to the reductionist approach... is that the whole shall be known through the study of its parts” adding that, “the reductionist finds himself using the methods of other disciplines in order to apprehend his own subject matter” while it cannot be known “whether reduction will suffice.”¹⁵⁹ It is important to note that Waltz, once again, speaks of explaining “international-political events” and thus not foreign policy as such. In this spirit he wrote that “The third image [system level] describes the framework of world politics, but without the first and

¹⁵⁵ Juneau, “Neoclassical Realist Strategic Analysis: A Statement,” 17.

¹⁵⁶ Rose, “Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy,” 168.

¹⁵⁷ Juneau, “Neoclassical Realist Strategic Analysis: A Statement,” 17.

¹⁵⁸ Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, “Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy,” 21.

¹⁵⁹ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 18-19.

second images [man/individual, and the state] there can be no knowledge of the forces that determine policy.”¹⁶⁰

Contrary to Waltz, Fearon, in his comparison of systemic IR and foreign policy theories, argues that systemic IR theories are at least in some ways foreign policy theories. Interpreting Waltz he writes that, as opposed to the explanation of general tendencies that IR theories make, “a theory of foreign policy is a theory of why particular states make particular foreign policy moves at particular times.” He then challenges this by arguing that, “It could not be the case that the predicted general tendency obtained, but no individual state ever took an action that contributed to making up the general tendency.”¹⁶¹

Even if theoretically and in absolute terms Fearon is right (and Waltz is wrong), which is to say that generally it is difficult to separate international politics from states’ foreign policies, practically it is indeed difficult – if not impossible – to find out “why state X made a certain move last Tuesday”¹⁶² unless one goes beyond structural analysis. Thus NcR is willing to pay the price of not having grand explanations and being reductionist, to the end of providing theoretically informed policy-relevant analyses, since (systemic) theories of international relations or international politics – even if Fearon’s

¹⁶⁰ Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*: 238; on Waltz’s “images” see also Michael W. Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 1997). 28-29.

¹⁶¹ Fearon, “Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations,” 295-96.

¹⁶² Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 121; Fearon, “Domestic Politics, Foreign Policy, and Theories of International Relations,” 295.

argument is valid – “do not attempt and by no means claim, to provide all the knowledge needed for the conduct of foreign policy.”¹⁶³

Some of the intervening variables used by or proposed in the NcR literature include, among others, the perceptions of the decision-makers; a country's state apparatus/power, “defined as the relative ability of the state to extract or mobilize resources as determined by the institutions of the state, nationalism, and ideology;” domestic politics; the political system; political culture, etc.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, several other Innepolitik approaches have been suggested from time to time as variables for analysing the unit level such as belief systems, bureaucratic politics, political psychology, ideological differences, etc.¹⁶⁵

Within an NcR framework, multiple intervening variables could be employed although the more variables are employed the more reductionist the analysis. Because flexibility, specificity and policy-relevant analysis is sought rather than a great degree of generalizability and parsimony, this study employs two intervening variables – *AKP Elite Ideology* and *Domestic Interest Groups* – rather than one, thus being closer to specificity.

The selection of the intervening variables for the analysis of TFP has to be based on the existing literature on TFP that was already reviewed, and on the

¹⁶³ Alexander L. George, *Bridging the Gap: Theory & Practice in Foreign Policy* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1993). 107.

¹⁶⁴ Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 157-65; Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," 38; Colin Dueck, "Neoclassical Realism and the National Interest: Presidents, Domestic Politics, and Major Military Interventions," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, and Norrin M. Ripsman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 147.

¹⁶⁵ George, *Bridging the Gap*: 113; Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," 163; see also Lloyd Jensen, *Explaining Foreign Policy* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1982).

aims that this study pursues. From that perspective one cannot just pick a variable from the above list and apply it to the case of Turkey. Going back to the review of the literature, it can be seen that one of the most salient features of the debate about TFP under the AKP is whether Turkish policies are driven by ideological or material (economic or relative power) incentives.

A different way to frame this debate would be to say that TFP, as far as the unit level is concerned, is defined either by domestic institutional transformations of liberalisation or by the ideology and culture of policy-makers. However, in this absolute form, the debate may lead one to believe that the above two possibilities are mutually exclusive, which may not be the case. After all, it has been argued that under certain conditions and political systems partial liberal democratic transformation, as in the case of Turkey, may lead to nationalism and crisis prone attitudes.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, democratisation and liberalisation do not necessarily exclude the role of ideology or hostile foreign policy behaviour.

In order for this research to not merely fit into the broader debate but also give answers to questions that arise from it, the intervening variables have to take into account ideational elements, such as ideology, as well as look at the interaction between the various social and political domestic interests groups. Studies, for example, that focus too much on the profile of the Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, and his worldview constitute individual level analyses and while they could complement the unit level analysis, they cannot by themselves

¹⁶⁶ See for example Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (Summer, 1995): 6, 5-38.

delineate sufficiently the domestic situation in Turkey. This thesis is not concerned with the individual level *per se* but policy-making elites are seen as a group of individuals, the (world)views of which influence policies and thus could help in the decoding of TFP.

Similarly, a variable that looks at the perceptions of the policy-makers misses other domestic dynamics. In this context, the *extractive and mobilisation capacity of the state (state power)* variable would probably be a good option. It examines how *state power* “shapes the types of internal balancing strategies countries are likely to pursue” and how it is affected and determined by the state’s institutions, nationalism and ideology.¹⁶⁷ However, this particular variable assumes that “states do not suffer from various types of internal fragmentation, such as elite dissensus and fragmentation, lack of social or ethno-nationalist cohesion, or regime vulnerability.”¹⁶⁸ In a country like Turkey, it would be a crucial mistake to assume that such problems and fragmentations do not exist.

From that perspective an intervening variable that would examine the role of domestic interest groups seems appropriate. Moreover, in the age of mass politics, and in a period where the Turkish political scene has been gradually influenced by an intensive Europeanization and democratisation process¹⁶⁹ it is

¹⁶⁷ Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman, "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy," 38.

¹⁶⁸ Taliaferro, "Neoclassical Realism and Resource Extraction: State Building for Future War," 214.

¹⁶⁹ See, e.g., Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP*: 55-68, 80-99; Grigoriadis, *Trials of Europeanization*.

important for the role of domestic actors in Turkish foreign policy-making to be examined.

Nonetheless, despite the rapidly increasing role of domestic groups, not all groups from all levels of society can be examined, not least because they are not as important. A domestic interest groups approach would deal with the different elites, public opinion, and different state and non-state groups, such as business groups, political parties and the military;¹⁷⁰ though it would not go so far as to take into account civil society actors, as their influence over foreign policy is very limited, while something like that would be beyond the scope of this research (see below).

But this approach, according to Norrin Ripsman, does not consider ideology as a domestic factor.¹⁷¹ Yet given that other (neoclassical) realists see great importance in ideology as a domestic factor,¹⁷² and, more importantly, taking under consideration the debate in the literature about the role of ideology in TFP, this study also looks at (AKP) *Elite Ideology* as one of the intervening variables. Thus it is suggested that *AKP Elite Ideology* and *Domestic Interest Groups* are the two intervening variables that better fit a neoclassical realist analysis of TFP.

¹⁷⁰ Ripsman, "Neoclassical Realism and Domestic Interest Groups," 170-71.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 174-75.

¹⁷² See for example Randall L. Schweller, "Neoclassical Realism and State Mobilization: Expansionist Ideology in the Age of Mass Politics," in *Neoclassical Realism, the State, and Foreign Policy*, ed. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell, and Norrin M. Ripsman (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 2009); Fareed Zakaria, "Realism and Domestic Politics: A Review Essay," *International Security* 17, no. 1 (Summer, 1992); Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*; Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*.

3.2.2.1. AKP Elite Ideology – 1st Intervening Variable

It is true that an analysis which would not take into consideration ideational, in this case ideological, factors could lead to limited and even inaccurate conclusions. For example Ripsman, who focuses only on domestic interest groups, argues that the policies of “regimes that lack institutionalized democratic stability” could be limited by their need to be “attentive to groups, such as the military, that have the capability to lead a coup or organized revolt.” To further underpin this point he uses Turkey’s “Islamist government” that “has shied away from moves such as outright termination of Turkey’s cooperative relationship with Israel.”¹⁷³

However, since Ripsman’s essay was published in 2009, the relations between Israel and Turkey have deteriorated dramatically although the domestic institutional order has not changed significantly.¹⁷⁴ This of course might well be the result of Turkey’s response to changes in its external environment; but had a certain ideology not been dominant among the state elites to translate these changes in a certain way, then the response might have been different. Therefore, while it is important to look at interest groups and public opinion as domestic factors in the analysis of the unit level, the role of ideology cannot be downplayed as a domestic factor that determines foreign policy, especially in the case of Turkey.

¹⁷³ Ripsman, "Neoclassical Realism and Domestic Interest Groups," 182-83.

¹⁷⁴ In March of 2013 the two countries entered a period of slow reconciliation.

In order to examine the role of AKP elite ideology in TFP, ideology, and its impact on policy outcomes needs to be defined first. Since the purpose is not necessarily to find how ideologies came about but how and if they affect TFP, emphasis is given to the approach of Goldstein and Keohane who suggest the identification of ideology rather than its historical roots.

Moreover, Goldstein and Keohane identify three types of beliefs: world views, principled beliefs, and causal beliefs.¹⁷⁵ According to the authors, ideas as world views have the “broadest impact on human action” as they are “entwined with people’s conceptions of their identities, evoking deep emotions and loyalties.” On the other hand, principled beliefs have a more ethical character as they are responsible for the distinction between right and wrong, as well as just and unjust.¹⁷⁶ Causal beliefs regard the “cause-effect relationships which derive authority from the shared consensus of recognized elites.” They “imply strategies for the attainment of goals, themselves valued because of shared principled beliefs, and understandable only within the context of broader world views.”¹⁷⁷ In this study, the primary focus with regard to the type of beliefs will be on the world views of the AKP elites, although not limited to that, as these are the ones underlined in the literature.¹⁷⁸

According to Goldstein and Keohane, these ideas and beliefs could influence policy outcomes through three causal pathways: 1) ideas as a road

¹⁷⁵ Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy," 8-11.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 10.

¹⁷⁸ Han, "Paradise Lost," 55-69.

map; 2) ideas as focal points and glue; and 3) institutionalization.¹⁷⁹ In the instance of the first causal pathway, ideas impact policy outcomes when actors believe in and are influenced by them “or the normative principles that they reflect.”¹⁸⁰ In the second causal pathway, ideas can work as problem solvers when hard decisions need to be made and “no ‘objective’ criteria” are available, thus leading to cooperation or collective action and as the “coalitional glue to facilitate the cohesion of particular groups.”¹⁸¹ The third causal pathway (institutionalisation), suggests that ideas can impact policies once “they have influenced organizational design” since they will be expressed by the organization and reflected in the people “whose interests are served by it.”¹⁸²

Even though all three causal pathways are relevant to the analysis, the first one will be at work more often. That is because the “ideas as roadmaps” pathway relates more to the ways policy-makers can adopt “new policies because their ideas had changed,” to how beliefs can lead different states to handle similar situations differently,¹⁸³ and to how “ideas serve the purpose of guiding behaviour under conditions of uncertainty by stipulating causal patterns or by providing compelling ethical or moral motivations for actions.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Goldstein and Keohane, “Ideas and Foreign Policy,” 12-24.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 12, 17-18.

¹⁸² Ibid., 20.

¹⁸³ Kathryn Sikkink, “The Power of Principled Ideas: Human Rights Policies in the United States and Western Europe,” in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, ed. Judith Goldstein and Rober O. Keohane (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), 160, 39-70.

¹⁸⁴ Goldstein and Keohane, “Ideas and Foreign Policy,” 16.

As far as the AKP is concerned, William Hale and Ergun Özbudun, argue that its ideology is conservative democracy. However, their findings are based on “the stature, programme, and other official documents” of the party and they do therefore acknowledge that one might argue against them. The authors go further to say that critiques that argue that the AKP is working towards establishing a Sharia-based Islamic Republic are not substantiated by “The AKP government’s performance.”¹⁸⁵ Importantly, Hale and Özbudun refer to the ideology of the AKP as a whole and as noted they only look at the official documents and declarations of the party, while their analysis about the party’s ideology and its historical roots focuses on domestic politics. Yet, when it comes to the analysis of TFP under the AKP the mention of Foreign Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, as well as of the President and Prime Minister becomes inevitable.¹⁸⁶

The specific reference to Davutoğlu’s ideas and world views in the book resembles texts that have been reviewed in the previous chapter, such as Cornell’s and Çağaptay’s, that examine writings and speeches to identify the ideology and then base their analysis of foreign policy on it. Admittedly, Hale and Özbudun come from a more critical perspective without simply basing their sayings on Davutoğlu or adopting an East-West distinction in their analysis. In short, although the authors make clear that Davutoğlu’s ideas

¹⁸⁵ Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP*: 29, 20-29.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 120-21.

exaggerate Turkey's role, they admit that they "had influence over the practice of foreign policy under the AKP."¹⁸⁷

In this light, if the declared ideology of a party is not necessarily the only one within it, or if certain world views of elite, policy-making, personalities of a (ruling) party can influence (foreign) policy outcomes, then it can be said that the ideology of the policy-making elites can be studied separately from the ideology of the party as a whole. Thus it is suggested that one of the employed intervening variables is "the AKP elite ideology," rather than "the AKP ideology;" meaning particularly the ideology of the foreign policy-making elite.¹⁸⁸ As such, the identification of the AKP elite ideology, and more specifically its world view (see below), is a necessary task that would enable the exploration of different pathways through which these beliefs influence policy outcomes.

Talking particularly about fascist ideology, Randall Scheweller argues that "in the age of mass politics, ideology plays an instrumental and necessary role in helping leaders extract resources and mobilize domestic support for novel and expensive grand strategies." He illustratively writes that "the hubris of fascist leaders set in motion recklessness in foreign policy that resulted in

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 120.

¹⁸⁸ When referring to the foreign policy-making elite it is meant primarily the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as other bodies that participate in Turkey's National Security Council, which is responsible for taking advisory decisions regarding national security policy, such as the Prime Ministry, the Ministry of Defence, and the Chief of the General Staff. In identifying elite worldviews the focus is mainly on Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President Abdullâh Gül, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, PM's special advisor İbrahim Kalın, as well as other AKP government officials. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Organogram," *Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/BAKANLIK/teskilat_semasi_12_20_links-en.pdf; "The NSC and the Secretariat General of the NSC within the Framework of the 1982 Constitution," Secretariat General of the National Security Council, http://www.mgk.gov.tr/Ingilizce/Tarihce/tarihce005_en.htm.

total disaster for themselves, their nations, and the rest of the world.”¹⁸⁹ From that perspective it seems that the identification of an ideology cannot be something abstract or be done in a scattered way but rather that a coherent set of ideas needs to somehow be identified.

Provided that when one makes judgements and talks about beliefs and ideas always does so as an external observer, then the findings should be considered not as absolute conclusions but rather as hypotheses.¹⁹⁰ According to Goldstein and Keohane, to identify ideas and beliefs one has to first engage in “evidentiary evidence” where various, though probably limited, documents are examined, and then engage in “descriptive inference” where systematic and random “aspects of behavior” are distinguished as well as the extent to which “self-reported and observed behaviour reflect beliefs” are assessed.¹⁹¹

In the case of this thesis, such documents constitute the basis of the research for the first intervening variable. Although elite interviews for the identification of patterns of beliefs could not be conducted due to foreseen and unforeseen objective reasons,¹⁹² the gap has been compensated with the examination of media interviews or speeches of the elites in question as well as personal expert interviews. The purpose remains the identification of the impact of ideas on policy. It is important to note that, according to Goldstein

¹⁸⁹ Schweller, "Neoclassical Realism and State Mobilization: Expansionist Ideology in the Age of Mass Politics," 228, 34. See also, Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*.

¹⁹⁰ Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy," 34.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

¹⁹² Problems such as funding for extensive field research, the language barrier, and the constantly unstable socio-political situation in Turkey, which rendered relevant interviewees unavailable.

and Keohane, if it is discovered that the connection between ideas and policy outcomes has been constrained by external forces like power or interests then the connection “would be spurious.”¹⁹³ But given that the role of elite ideology in policy-making is seen as intervening, not independent, ideology is expected to be constrained by systemic forces. Therefore, it is acknowledged that the conclusions cannot be absolute, having, however, in mind that the goal of this thesis in terms of the first intervening variable is to identify the causal role of elite ideology as one of many factors that shape foreign policy behaviour.

Moving to the subject of interest, the ideology of the AKP elites needs to be identified. Among other things, in the literature it has been called “Muslim nationalism,” “democratic conservatism,” “Islamism,” “democratic Islamism,” etc. Based on the above-developed methodology with regard to ideas and beliefs, a first analysis and definition of the AKP elite ideology follows, which as has been argued is rooted in Turkish political Islam – i.e. political Islamism. More evidence of the AKP elite ideology along with the causal connection – where there is one – between this ideology and policy outcomes is found later on, in the case studies and the comparative analysis.

AKP Elite Ideology: Political Islamism

Islam in Turkey and its political role are deeply rooted in the country’s history and especially in the Ottoman period where religion played a central role on both the political and societal level. During that period a number of

¹⁹³ Goldstein and Keohane, “Ideas and Foreign Policy,” 29.

Islamic religious orders (*tarikats*), which were established in the 10th century AD, operated. The purpose of these small brotherhood groups of mysticists was to keep Islam alive in the form of a secret and merciful faith, and to prevent it from becoming a “cold and typical doctrine.” They also promoted a “new Islam” instead of the orthodox Islam of the state and were an important source of spiritual support and welfare within society.¹⁹⁴

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 *tarikats* were banned, in part because they posed a threat to Kemal Atatürk’s secular top-down social engineering project. However they maintained a secret and underground role up to 1950 and the beginning of the multi-party period with the election of the Menderes’ Democratic Party (DP) to power. DP loosened religious restrictions and therefore *tarikats* operated more freely thus being able to establish strong ties with centre-right (conservative) parties, which they saw as protectors from the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment.¹⁹⁵

In the years that followed *tarikats* became more powerful and influential as well as strong opponents of secular policies and actors. It is particularly important that *tarikats*, and especially the *Nakşibendi* order, “established ties to political parties and educated party activists for the purpose of undermining the strict secularism of the Turkish political order.” Such party activists include, among others, prominent conservative (or pro-Islamic) politicians in

¹⁹⁴ Ioannis T. Mazis, *Μυστικιστικά Ισλαμικά Τάγματα: Ο Μικρασιατικός Χώρος* [Mysticist Islamic Orders: The Near Eastern Space] (Athens: Papazisi, 2013), 52-53.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 53; Birol A. Yeşilada, “The Virtue Party,” in *Political Parties in Turkey*, ed. Barry Rubin and Metin Heper (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002), 71.

Turkish politics and history like, Necmetin Erbakan, Turgut Özal, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.¹⁹⁶ The National View or National Outlook Organization (*Milli Görüş*), out of which emerged the AKP in the late 1990s and early 2000s, was precisely a product of these processes. It was established by Necmetin Erbakan in the 1970s in Switzerland, it initially operated in Europe seeking support from Turkish expatriates and it provided educational services based on Islamic Nakşibendi teachings before acquiring a political role in Turkey.¹⁹⁷ Thus the National Outlook movement became the first coherent and salient political Islamic movement which also reflected the by then underground ties between *tarikats* and political actors.

The ideology of the movement became the basis for Erbakan's first political party, the National Order Party (MNP), which was closed down by the military on the grounds that it was against secularism. It was succeeded by the National Salvation Party (MSP) in 1972 which one year later won 48 seats in the Grand National Assembly and formed a coalition government with the CHP between 1973 and 1974.¹⁹⁸

The rise of political Islam in Turkey was also favoured by a number of political changes throughout the course of the 20th century. A particularly significant period for political Islam was the 1980s and the governance of Turgut Özal and his Motherland Party (ANAP). During that period the Kemalist military elites, paradoxically, favoured the inclusion of political Islam

¹⁹⁶ Yeşilada, "The Virtue Party," 72-73.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 73-74.

¹⁹⁸ Gareth Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey: Running West, Heading East?* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). 131-34.

in politics as they saw it as a means of combating the threat of the communist ideology within the country; and thus was developed the so called “Turkish-Islamic” synthesis, a complicated mixture of nationalism and political Islamism.¹⁹⁹

Within this political environment, Özal managed to strengthen the role of political Islam while his reforms liberalized the economy to a great extent thus allowing capitalists from cities of the Anatolian periphery – also known as Anatolian Tigers – to enter the picture and play a decisive role in Turkey’s economic development and capital accumulation.²⁰⁰ In the 1990s, after many Islamic parties had been banned and new ones were formed, Erbakan’s Islamist Welfare Party (RP), which succeeded the MSP, made a strong return and after the 1995 national elections it formed a coalition government together with the Truth Path Party (DYP), with Erbakan as Prime Minister.

According to Ali Bulaç’s categorisation, Erbakan belongs to the second generation (1950-2000) of Islamists which succeeded the first one (1850-1924) after the latter’s elimination by Kemal’s single-party rule. Bulaç, who identifies himself as a second generation Islamist as well, suggests that the second generation were real Islamists who, however, passed their weaknesses to the third generation due to lack of self-criticism. Within this framework, the ideological features of second generation Islamists, such as Erbakan and Erdoğan, fit Bulaç’s definition of (political) Islamism: “an intellectual, moral,

¹⁹⁹ Angel Rabasa and Stephen F. Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2008). 37-38.

²⁰⁰ Ziya Öniş, "Turgut Özal and his Economic Legacy: Turkish Neo-Liberalism in Critical Perspective," *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 4 (2004): 113-44.

societal, economic political and inter-state movement that is based on Islam as the main reference point and aims for a 'new' conception of the person, society, politics/state and thus a new model of social organization and universal Islamic Union."²⁰¹

From that perspective, identifying the ideological features of National Outlook would help in the better understanding of the ideology of AKP elites as former members and followers of Erbakan.²⁰² The Islamist movement made its goals and beliefs very clear through its party programs and Erbakan's speeches. They were characterised by nostalgia for the Ottoman Empire, support for a Turkish state based on Muslim moral principles, opposition to religious oppression and birth control, anti-Semitism, and a strong opposition to the Turkey-European Economic Community (EEC, later EU) relationship; Erbakan argued that Turkey's accession to the EEC would make it part of Israel.²⁰³ Furthermore, National Outlook was against secularism, globalization, and Westernism; it also thought of East and West as inherently incompatible and saw "Turkey's identity and future closely linked with the Muslim world, rather than with the West."²⁰⁴

These ideological characteristics sit well with Samir Amin's observation that, political Islam does not accept the separation between state and religion

²⁰¹ Ali Bulaç, "On Islamism: Its Roots, Development and Future," *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 4 (2012): 67-71.

²⁰² A recent biography of former President and Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gül, makes the case that Gül was a more rational and cool-headed person than other AKP leaders and that he never liked how Erbakan or the AKP after him flirted with Islamism despite him being a devout Muslim. See, Gerald MacLean, *Abdullah Gül & the Making of the New Turkey* (Cornwall: Oneworld Publications, 2014).

²⁰³ Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey*: 131-32; Ronnie Margulies and Ergin Yildizoglu, "The Political Uses of Islam in Turkey," *Middle East Report* 18(1988).

²⁰⁴ Rabasa and Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*: 40-41.

while it also “disapproves of the very principle of democracy – the right of society to build its own future through its freedom to legislate.”²⁰⁵ Moreover, they fit with Bulaç’s definition of Islamism as well as with at least three of his notions. First, that religion can “be brought into politics, economic life, interstate relations, societal and public policies within the autonomous borders that they draw,” and that religion can be taken as a reference point for the organization of areas of life; those who deny these, Bulaç says, “are those whom the Qur’an clearly describes as ‘people who accept part of the Sacred Book and reject the rest’.” Second, that (political) Islamism is “a response and challenge to modernism” without, however, being “a similar, offshoot, or legitimizing framework to the hegemonic rhetoric and systems with modern roots;” and, third, that Islam is “the ontological, epistemological, and the moral reference point in a socio-political framework” which could also lead to a “new regional integration.”²⁰⁶

This salient Islamist agenda of Erbakan, especially as it was expressed during his 1996-1997 governance through his domestic and foreign policies, brought him at odds with the military establishment; a fact that led to his overthrow via the so called “post-modern coup” after the military issued a memorandum in February, 1997. Thereafter, the military initiated a campaign against everything Islamic. At the same time, the “post-modern coup” became a reference point through which the Islamist movement learned how to adapt to

²⁰⁵ Samir Amin, *The People's Spring: The Future of the Arab Revolution* (United States: Pambazuka Press, 2012). 94-96.

²⁰⁶ Bulaç, "On Islamism," 68, 69, 73.

the political reality and how to adopt a more indirect approach to politics, one that could save it from another confrontation with the Kemalist establishment.²⁰⁷

The latter realization created a politico-ideological schism within the Islamic movement: on the one hand, led by Necmettin Erbakan, there were the “traditionalists” who did not favour a change in the movement’s political orientation; the ones who remained faithful to what Bulaç calls second generation Islamism. On the other hand, the “reformists”, led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül (later, the AKP’s leaders), advocated “that the party needed to rethink its approach to a number of fundamental issues, particularly democracy, human rights, and relations with the West.”²⁰⁸ These were Bulaç’s third generation Islamists who, as Bulaç argues, did not “stay fully loyal to sources and aims within their own tradition” but were rather consumed by power struggle considerations. In Bulaç’s words: “The unexpected success brought power, but because ideas regarding the nature and modern structures of power could not be developed accordingly, the principle of ‘power for the sake of power’, was adopted.”²⁰⁹ By extension, these new political Islamists, lost their way and strayed away from the essence of their ideology and tradition.

These ideological developments and shifts were first expressed within the RP’s successor, the Virtue Party (FP), which in turn was banned in 2001. After that, the movement formally split up and two new parties emerged: the Justice

²⁰⁷ Rabasa and Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*: 44-47.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 45.

²⁰⁹ Bulaç, “On Islamism,” 72.

and Development Party (AKP) of the reformists and the Felicity Party (SP) of the traditionalists. Although stemming from the same movement and the same ideological background as the SP, the AKP employed a more moderate stance. It abolished the label “Islamic” and branded itself as a conservative-democratic party. It adopted a positive approach to democratic and Western values, thus transforming its public image and discourse, while it shifted its rhetoric and policies in favour of the EU and openly supported Turkey’s accession into it.

But this is where the paradox becomes salient. How does an elite with traditionalist background, with a history of activism within and educated by a second generation movement (National Outlook), and with ideological ties to Islamist orders such as the Nakşibendi, conduct politics in a “reformist” way and get criticized by scholars such as Bulaç as not genuinely Islamist? The first thing that needs to be addressed here are the circumstances under which this ideological transformation occurred. Then the continuity and change in the worldview of AKP elites should be looked at.

Beginning with the first issue, it is important to keep in mind the turning point in the AKP’s ideological transformation, that is, the 1997 “post-modern coup,” for it bears great significance as to why these changes emerged. Admittedly, these are issues hard to determine with certainty but, in retrospect, it seems that it was a rational political act of tactical and strategic importance by the AKP; a manoeuvre, similar to the one that led to the “Turkish-Islamic” synthesis of the 1980s, as it stemmed from political anxieties akin, yet opposite, to the ones that the Kemalist establishment faced back then.

In other words, the AKP's reformist and modernist orientation towards political Islam integrated Kemalist ideological features into the party's ideology due to its necessity to defeat the dominant Kemalist establishment, survive in the political conditions of the time, and ultimately ascend to and consolidate its own power. In this context, for example, the reform and democratization EU-backed packages were seen by the AKP as a means of weakening the power and state control of the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment, while the maintenance of a pro-Western rhetoric could be seen as populism, directed both domestically and abroad, as that would appeal to the pro-Kemalist masses and the Western allies alike.

These processes of ideological transformation are directly related to pre-conditions that increase the importance of the role of ideas, as suggested by the pathway of ideas as roadmaps. Therefore, as Goldstein and Keohane put it, "Depressions, wars, the decline of a political party, and the overthrow of a government may all cause ideas to become important because all constitute exogenous shocks that undermine the existing order," just like the 1997 coup in Turkey. In turn, "radical shifts in the political agenda may occur because of the common acceptance of some new normative or causal set of beliefs."²¹⁰

It can thus be suggested that a new political agenda was introduced as expressed through the reformist wave of National Outlook, namely, the AKP. But to what extent are AKP elite statements and (reformist) proclamations consistent? Also, have Erbakan-like rhetoric and (domestic and foreign) policies

²¹⁰ Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy," 17.

become more prominent? By admitting the latter as being the case the first question is essentially answered as well. That is, the AKP has not been consistent in maintaining its modernizing stand. It rather returned to its traditional roots and, as it will be seen throughout the empirical analysis, it has done so in two main steps, in 2007 and 2010.

In 2007 the Turkish parliament was to elect the new president. The Kemalist establishment was against the election of the AKP's Abdullah Gül, as they were suspicious of the political aims of the party, and thus the military issued an ultimatum on its website warning secular civilian forces about the potential threat posed by Gül's election. The ultimatum, labelled "e-coup", also accused the AKP of anti-secularism, of being enemies of the Turkish Republic as well as against the legacy of Kemal Atatürk. The AKP did not back down and Gül was eventually elected as president, effectively marking the beginning of the end for the dominance of Kemalists over the state. Thereafter a number of court cases against military coup plans were initiated leading to "the prosecution and detainment of over three hundred military officers, including sixty active duty generals and admirals."²¹¹ Thereby, the AKP managed to replace the Kemalist-military rule with its own civic governance, and the military's ability to intervene in politics was minimized.²¹²

²¹¹ Ahmet T. Kuru, "The Rise and Fall of Military Tutelage in Turkey: Fears of Islamism, Kurdism, and Communism," *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 2 (2012): 38-39.

²¹² Also, Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013; Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview to the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview to the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013; and USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

The next step came with a referendum for constitutional reforms on September 12th 2010, a date with symbolic importance as it marked the 30th anniversary of the 1980 coup. The AKP's proposed constitutional reforms passed with 58% of the votes. As soon as three days after the referendum, Halil Karaveli analysed the results and argued that Turkey was "moving toward authoritarianism."²¹³ Describing the importance of the referendum for the AKP he wrote,

The crucial amendments in the constitutional package are those who are designed to solve the AKP's problem with the high judiciary, which to all intents and purposes had become the last vestige of the old system of state tutelage over the executive. Only the high courts were still in the position of being able to throw up hurdles in the way of the AKP government. The changes that have now been adopted will alter the composition of the Constitutional court and of the High board of judges and prosecutors. They basically put an end to the independence that the high judiciary has enjoyed in the selection of the members of the Constitutional court and the High board of judges and prosecutors. That was what Erdoğan had in mind when he celebrated that "the caste system" in the high judiciary had come to an end.²¹⁴

In these two steps the AKP managed, among other things, to institutionalise its ideas which could now be associated with Goldstein and

²¹³ Halil M. Karaveli, "Referendum Victory Opens the Way for Erdogan's Presidency," *Turkey Analyst* 3, no. 15 (2010), <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2010/100915A.html>. The great power that the AKP and Erdoğan acquired as a result of the referendum was also highlighted by many of our interviewees.

²¹⁴ Ibid.; For the political implications of the constitutional amendments see also, İltis Turan, "A Background to the Constitutional Referendum: Reinforcing the Politics of Polarization," *The German Marshall Fund of the United States* (2010).

Keohane's third causal pathway through which ideas influence policy – institutionalisation. In their words, "Once ideas have influenced organizational design, their influence will be reflected in the incentives of those in the organization and those whose interests are served by it."²¹⁵ The consolidation of the AKP's power was more often than not paralleled by the more vocal expression of Erbakan-like ideologically-driven rhetoric and policies. This means two things: that the worldviews of AKP elites became more able to influence policy – not least because of the marginalisation of the Kemalist establishment; and, by implication, that their expressed ideological convictions re-shifted from reformist to traditionalist. Within this framework, the only thing that remains is to identify expressions of this ideological transformation. Thus, in what follows, expressed ideas of key AKP officials, indicative of its elite's ideological orientation are cited.

In 1996, during his time as Istanbul's mayor (1994-1998), Erdoğan famously stated that, "Democracy is like a train. We shall get out when we arrive at the station we want;" in addition to his statements that he was a "servant of *Sharia*" and the "imam of Istanbul."²¹⁶ Erdoğan's worldview and goals could not get any clearer; and although he has disavowed his extreme views, it seems that they remained largely the same after the AKP's election to power. To this testifies, for example, a 2013 interview of Abdullatif Şener, one

²¹⁵ Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy," 20.

²¹⁶ Maximilian Popp, "The 'Tribune of Anatolia: America's Dark View of Turkish Premier Erdogan,'" *Spiegel Online International*(2010), <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-tribune-of-anatolia-america-s-dark-view-of-turkish-premier-erdogan-a-732084.html>; Rabasa and Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*: 54-55.

of the founding members of the AKP and, among other titles, the party's deputy (2002-2007). According to Şener, "The AK Party's party programme was a democratic programme. The Prime Minister [Erdoğan] has never adopted the party programme." And he went on to say that, "The Prime Minister is not a person that internalized the idea of democracy... He thinks that since he won the elections he can do whatever he wants."²¹⁷

Other public statements of Erdoğan also correspond to the ideological features of National Outlook that have been identified. For example, he has repeatedly been accused of anti-Semitism. The criticism peaked when the PM, during anti-government protests in Soma due to a mine disaster with many casualties, said to a protester, "Why are you running away, Israeli spawn?"²¹⁸ Moreover, his anti-Semitic (not merely anti-Israeli) and anti-Western tendencies have manifested several times, especially when he accuses "foreign dark forces" and Jews for crises in Turkey, such as the 2013 massive anti-government Gezi protests.²¹⁹ These examples are particularly important as they demonstrate anti-Semitic tendencies outside the context of a crisis between Turkey and Israel and thus they cannot be merely interpreted as populist

²¹⁷ ResearchTurkey, "Interview with Abdüllatif Şener (Part I): "Turkish Politics since the 1990s: Hopes, Resentments and Current Challenges", " *Centre for Policy and Research on Turkey (ResearchTurkey)* II, no. 6 (August, 2013), <http://researchturkey.org/wp/wordpress/?p=3924>.

²¹⁸ "Erdogan shouts anti-Israel slur at protester," *Haaretz*(16/05/2014), <http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/1.591094>. It is important that this incident was recorded when cameras were not supposed to be there and. Therefore, it could be suggested that Erdoğan was not pretending or employing a certain rhetoric for populist reasons – as is often argued when it comes to Turkish-Israeli crises – but rather that he was being himself.

²¹⁹ Gareth Jenkins, "Erdogan, the AKP and the Repercussions of the Gezi Park Protests," *Turkey Analyst* 6, no. 13 (2013), <http://www.turkeyanalyst.org/publications/turkey-analyst-articles/item/49-erdo%25C4%259Fan-the-akp-and-the-repercussions-of-the-gezi-park-protests.html>.

outbursts; rather, it can be suggested that they are reflective of more systematic attitudes.²²⁰

Erdoğan's religion-driven ideology is also demonstrated in his approach to state-society relations. In addition to his efforts to control the state's powers – e.g. the Judiciary – he also referred to Caesarean births and abortion as crimes, passed a law of restrictions against alcohol, and lifted the decades-old ban on women's headscarves.²²¹

All the above-mentioned statements and policies suggest at least some continuity in Erdoğan's ideas and point to his adherence to more traditionalist ideas. A suggestion which is in agreement with Hakan Yavuz's conclusion that, "His primary identity is Islam, and he sees the world from a religious perspective."²²² Similarly, Vaggelis Papadopoulos, a biographer of Erdoğan argues that "In the case of Tayyip Erdoğan we have a pious Muslim. And this faith is not only expressed substantially in personal and family behaviour, nor only symbolically. He does not care, for example, nor does he put effort to

²²⁰ In addition to other sources cited in this section, Dr. Louis Fishman and Dr. Nikos Moudouros also argued that this is a feature in AKP's rhetoric and policies. Academic Dr. Louis Fishman. Skype interview with the author, Istanbul, 09 January 2014. Dr Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013. Dr. Fishman also said that AKP's lack of control or discipline of anti-Semitic outbursts by AKP members was enough to suggest that there is at least tolerance towards anti-Semitism within the party.

²²¹ "Erdoğan against Caesarean births, says abortion a 'crime'," *Today's Zaman* (25/05/2012), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-281536-erdogan-says-against-caesarean-births-abortion-crime.html>; Thomas Seibert, "Turkey's alcohol law renews accusations of Erdogan's Islamist agenda," *The National* (26/06/2013), <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/europe/turkeys-alcohol-law-renews-accusations-of-erdogans-islamist-agenda>; "Turkey lifts decades-old ban on headscarves," *Al Jazeera* (08/10/2013), <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/10/turkey-lifts-decades-old-ban-headscarves-201310814177943704.html>.

²²² Hakan M. Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). 131.

show at any time, even in painless small details, his faith in Islam and the homeland.”²²³

But the AKP elite is not limited to Erdoğan, while it can be suggested that these ideas are at least to a certain extent prevalent among other AKP officials as well. One of the AKP elite beliefs which is central to this analysis, is their view of the Middle East, especially vis-à-vis Turkey. An important expresser of ideas on this subject is Ahmet Davutoğlu. While he denied that the term “neo-Ottomanism” is appropriate to describe Turkey’s foreign policy, he repeatedly emphasised the significance of the Middle East for Turkey in cultural and ideological terms. In one instance he said that, “Ottoman history, and also our Republican history, the former bi-polar world, these are permanent parameters that cannot be changed. They are an essential part of Turkish identity.”²²⁴

Indeed, Turkey’s foreign and particularly regional foreign policy after the rise of the AKP to power was very much influenced by Davutoğlu’s opinions, perceptions, planning and geopolitical analyses. This “new” orientation of TFP, often called “Davutoğlu doctrine,” has as a starting point the fact that Turkey has historical and geographic depth. According to Davutoğlu’s understanding, the “historical depth” of the Ottoman Empire and heritage provides Turkey with “geographic depth.” Historical and geographic depth are necessary for Turkey’s “strategic depth” which enables it to have influence over multiple (geo)political regions. As such, the formation of a strategy, that is, finding a “strategic orientation,” according to Davutoğlu, needs to be done by examining

²²³ Vaggelis Papadopoulos, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan* (Athens: Ekdoseis Kinitro, 2012). 140, 40-64.

²²⁴ Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy [Speech],” *SETA Foundation* (2009): 4.

the “geo-cultural, geopolitical and geo-economic dimensions of strategic depth.”²²⁵

It can be suggested that a sense of ownership of the former Ottoman space can be traced in Davutoğlu’s approach alongside geostrategic concerns that see the “Balkan-Middle East axis” as necessary for former Ottoman Empire (and thus Turkey) to become a great power.²²⁶ Yet the Islamic element is found throughout his work, intertwined with his geopolitical approach. Talking about the 1980s and 1990s Balkans he writes, “every temple that gets demolished in the Balkans, every Islamic institution that gets extinct, every customary element that vanquishes from a cultural perspective also constitutes a cornerstone that gets removed from the influence Turkey could exercise in this region beyond its borders.” And he goes on to add that Turkey needs to come up with alternative policies on the basis of which “inevitably there will be the effort of keeping the Balkan and Ottoman-Islamic civilization alive.”²²⁷

Similar is his understanding about the Middle East, as noted throughout the following chapters, which ultimately points to the fact that strategic calculations and external systemic realities are filtered through a worldview of political Islamic and Ottoman notions, while they are consistent with a more assertive and revisionist foreign policy approach.

Gül has expressed similar, if more moderate, ideas as well when as Davutoğlu he drew parallels between the regional “peace and harmony during

²²⁵ Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth*: 35-36.

²²⁶ Ibid., 101.

²²⁷ Ibid., 103-04.

the Ottoman centuries” and Turkey’s ability to transform the Middle East “into a new area of cooperation.”²²⁸ Moreover, for Gül, Turkey’s responsibility for the Middle East’s “bright future... goes beyond short-term economic and political interests. This is a mission with humanitarian and moral aspects.”²²⁹

According to London, this goes for Erdoğan as well since he:

regards Turkey as *primus inter pares* [first among equals] among Muslim nations. Moreover, this desire for Muslim leadership has been accompanied with a distinctly anti-Western attitude. In part this attitude is understandable given Europe’s rejection of Turkey as an EU member in 2001.²³⁰ But this policy shift goes beyond petty retaliation. He has noted that his dream is the restoration of the Ottoman caliphate.²³¹

Yavuz makes a similar case, arguing that the AKP government has “pan-Islamic concerns” which also played a role in the divergence between Turkish and American policies over the 2003 Iraq war.²³² Importantly, this can be associated with the overall approach of the AKP to the region, as expressed in the party’s undisclosed report, “The Turkey Project.” In the report it is stated that,

²²⁸ Abdullah Gül, “Turkey’s Role in a Changing Middle East,” *Mediterranean Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (2004): 4, 7.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²³⁰ As well as the 2005-2006 stalemate in Turkey-EU negotiations, this thesis would argue.

²³¹ Herbert I. London, “Turkey at the Crossroads,” in *The Sunni Vanguard: Can Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia Survive the New Middle East?*, ed. Jed Babbin, David P. Goldman, and Herbert I. London (New York: London Centre for Policy Research, 2014), 3.

²³² Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*: 229.

Our party believes that Turkey should fill the power vacuum in the Middle East created by the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey has to become a major intervening actor in the Middle East and the surrounding area. We believe that Turkey cannot solve its bilateral and domestic problems without becoming an imperial power in the Middle East. There is also no other way to bring peace and stability to the region.²³³

From this perspective, AKP (elite) ideology strays significantly from the *status quo* foreign policy approach of the traditional Kemalist establishment. As Turkey's Deputy PM, Bülent Arınç, put it: "Leaving the status quo-oriented and static mentality of the past behind, Turkey has undergone a process of open and dynamic change under the AK Party."²³⁴ As such, the foreign policy outlook of the AKP elite ideology is different to that of the Kemalists, for it is more outward and prone to mingle or intervene in the region; it sees Turkey as an aspiring leading Muslim power, an Islamic hegemon.²³⁵ Whilst Arınç denies Turkey's leadership aspirations, despite evidence of this, he does acknowledge the appeal of the country's "different role" to the Arab world.²³⁶ Within this framework, AKP elite ideology can be characterized as revisionist, at least in terms of official written and verbal expressions by AKP leaders. Based on this, as noted later on as well, it can be proposed that when AKP elite ideology

²³³ Quoted in, *ibid.*, 229, footnote no. 46.

²³⁴ Bülent Arınç, "Transformation in the Arab World: The view from Turkey," *ORSAM Review of Regional Affairs*, no. 4 (2014): 3-4.

²³⁵ Ahmet Davutoğlu's famous book, "Strategic Depth," upon which the AKP's foreign policy has been largely based, includes many examples of these notions. The case studies analysis revisits Davutoğlu's work. See, Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth*.

²³⁶ Arınç, "Transformation in the Arab World," 5-6.

predominates over other domestic drivers, TFP behaviour will most likely demonstrate revisionist tendencies.

Lastly, it is important to look at how these elites see their own ideology, the place of their country within it, and its relationship to the region and the West. One of the best examples comes again from Ahmet Davutoğlu, who apart from being a strategist and a foreign policy-maker appears to have the role of an Islamic intellectual as well. In one of his most important works – his Ph.D. thesis which was later published as a book – he examines the ontological, epistemological, and axiological relationship between Islamic and Western worlds. According to him, the main argument of the book is that institutional and historical differences are not the main source of clashes and antitheses between Islamic and Western political thought but rather their “philosophical, methodological, and theoretical background.”²³⁷

While Davutoğlu claims to be against the West-Islam or West-Rest categorizations because of their confrontational character,²³⁸ he seems to be undertaking a post-Orientalist²³⁹ task whereby he essentialises Islam in his effort to deconstruct Western narratives of and policies towards it. He argues, for example, that:

²³⁷ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Εναλλακτικές Κοσμοθεωρίες: Η Επίδραση της Ισλαμικής και της Δυτικής Κοσμοθεωρίας στην Πολιτική Θεωρία* [Alternative Paradigms: the Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory], trans. Konstantinos Koliopoulos, 2nd ed. (Athens: Poiotita, 2011). 22.

²³⁸ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "The Clash of Interests: An Explanation of the World [Dis]Order," *Intellectual Discourse* 2, no. 2 (1994): 129.

²³⁹ Gyan Prakash, "Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32, no. 2 (1990): 383-408.

The principle difference between Islamic and Western *weltenshauungs* [worldviews] is related to the contrast between the 'ontologically determined epistemology' of Islam and the 'epistemologically determined ontology' of the Western philosophical traditions. This difference is especially significant in understanding the axiological basis of political legitimacy and the process of justification.²⁴⁰

In this light, (political) Islam for Davutoğlu, and other AKP elites, is not merely seen as just another ideology, but one that can be an alternative to and replace the Western worldview, culture, and hegemony. As İftar Gözaydın puts it, Davutoğlu understands that "Islamic and Western paradigms are incompatible" and "fundamentally different."²⁴¹

After having examined the roots, content and features of the AKP elite ideology, namely, political Islamism, it must be made clear that this was neither an attempt to present a monolithic view of (political) Islam nor to generalize these findings with regard to Islam or its role in the politics and society of other countries. It is, however, maintained that the presented version of political Islam is one that characterises the (foreign) policy-making elites of AKP since 2002. Moreover, as explained, it is argued that during the course of the AKP's governance the expression and influence of this ideology on policy-making and rhetoric has become more salient.

What has not been seen, and remains to be analysed in the next chapters, is the extent to which political Islamism drives and influences Turkish foreign

²⁴⁰ Davutoğlu, *Εναλλακτικές Κοσμοθεωρίες*: 29.

²⁴¹ İftar Gözaydın, "Ahmet Davutoğlu: Role as an Islamic Scholar Shaping Turkey's Foreign Policy," in *International Relations and Islam: Diverse Perspectives*, ed. Nassef Manabilang Adiong (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 96.

policy-making. That is, while it is accepted that political Islamism is prevalent among AKP elites, it is maintained that it is very often constrained by external pressures and other pragmatic – economic and security – interests. This is also one of the reasons why the NcR approach is important; it is not limited to arguing that TFP is merely driven by ideological or pragmatic concerns (or both),²⁴² but it rather identifies when ideology plays a role, and when other considerations are more important.

Part of these considerations are reflected in the second intervening variable – i.e. domestic interest groups – and its relationship with the system-level, independent variables, which is elaborated next.

3.2.2.2. Domestic Interest Groups – 2nd Intervening Variable

The role of domestic interest groups – or pressure groups – is the second intervening variable that is employed for the analysis of the unit level (state). Interest groups have long been acknowledged as a domestic factor that influences foreign policy. Specifically it has been argued that “The domestic sources of foreign policy are widely recognized, and include interest groups, mass public opinion, and the printed and electronic media.”²⁴³ Robert Putnam writes that “At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by

²⁴² For such arguments see, for example, Kinzer, *Reset: Iran, Turkey and America's Future*; Cornell, "What Drives Turkish Foreign Policy?."; Karaosmanoğlu, "Turkish Security Culture: Evolutionary or Carved in a Stone."

²⁴³ Robert H. Trice, "Foreign Policy Interest Groups, Mass Public Opinion and the Arab-Israeli Dispute," *The Western Political Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1978): 238.

pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups.”²⁴⁴

While domestic actors and their influence on foreign policy can be studied separately, in the same way that public opinion for example is often looked at as different from interest groups, Ripsman argues that these and other domestic actors “share common aspects that make it appropriate to treat them together in a comprehensive theory of domestic political actors.” In what he calls domestic political actors he includes public opinion, the military, organized interest groups, the media, economic elites, etc., noting, importantly, that “democratic and non-democratic [or semi-democratic] governments will differ in the manner in which they interact with domestic actors.”²⁴⁵

Following Ripsman’s logic, domestic interest groups are seen in the broader sense. Emphasis is given to different political parties, public opinion, the military elites, and the business/economic elites (see Table I). The logic behind the selection of these groups is their different character (i.e. political, economic, and military). In this way, two goals can be achieved: the consideration of material interests in conjunction with ideas in foreign policy-making, as well as the different aspects of TFP (e.g. economic), rather than merely security considerations, as the NcR framework allows.

Other domestic actors could be included in the analysis, such as the media or other civil society actors. However, this would render the analysis too

²⁴⁴ Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 434.

²⁴⁵ Ripsman, "Neoclassical Realism and Domestic Interest Groups," 170-71.

reductionist with the danger of positioning it among Innepolitik approaches rather than integrated ones. Further, it is maintained that, based on the existing literature, the domestic actors under examination are the most important ones. That is not to say that, for example, civil society actors are completely irrelevant but to state that this study focuses on the most substantive ones according to the existing research.

The case is similar when it comes to the media. Specifically, it has been argued that since 1980 the “ownership and control [of media companies] passed to the hands of businesspersons, namely to some business groups” while at the same time “government incentives were also another important source of revenue for some media companies.” As a result, Bahattin Karademir and Ali Danişman write, “Media companies... were somewhat inclined to change their coverage for the interest and sake of related political actors and businesspersons.”²⁴⁶ Having this in mind along with recent reports about the suppressed media freedom in Turkey, the examination of the business groups’ interests as well as the interests of the ruling party should be enough to indicate the domestic situation in Turkey and its impact on foreign policy, without having to take into account the media and additional civil society actors as well.

²⁴⁶ Bahattin Karademir and Ali Danişman, “Business Groups and Media in Turkey: A Co-Evolutionary Perspective to their Interrelationships,” *Problems and Perspectives in Management* 5, no. 3 (2007): 52.

Table I: Domestic Interest Groups

Political Parties (Opposition)	Military Elites	Public Opinion	Economic/Business Groups
Republican People's Party (CHP)	Kemalist (secular) Officers/ Generals (their opposition and marginalisation)	Opinion polls	Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MÜSIAD) (secular capital)
National Movement Party (MHP)		Electoral polls	Turkish Industry & Businessmen Association (TÜSIAD) (Islamic capital)
Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)			

It is important to note that not all domestic interest groups are involved in all foreign policy decision-making processes, while there is significant overlap between the interests of some of them. For example the interests of business groups and the economic elites may be divided along the lines of “Islamic” (e.g. MÜSIAD) and “secular” (e.g. TÜSIAD) capital which would overlap with the respective (political) Islamic (AKP) or secular powers (e.g. CHP). Similarly the interests of the (secular) military elites for example are usually consistent with the ones of the secular parties. This is to say that not all the listed groups are considered to have a role in foreign policy-making throughout – not to mention that there are many, yet smaller, groups that have not been listed. Their role will be highlighted or de-emphasised accordingly.

Business groups in particular, have had an increasingly important role in the last twenty years and more so in the last ten years in Turkey. Given the

growing economic relations of Turkey with the Arab/Muslim countries but also the significantly developed trade relations with Europe, economic elites do have a role in the policy-making of Ankara, and that needs to be taken into account specifically when one talks about Turkey's liberal foreign policy. Furthermore, the interests of the Kurds (which are politically expressed through the BDP), for example, do play a more significant role when it comes to the relations of Turkey with Iraq, Syria, and Iran. Public opinion is always a constant but it becomes more important when it comes to issues of national significance and matters like Turkey's relations with Israel and the Arab World or Muslim nations.

All these social and political actors (which often constitute domestic fragmentation), along with the external international changes in relative power, are always managed and filtered by the policy-making elite (the AKP in this instance) that expresses – at least at the rhetoric level – a certain ideology. This is not to say that ideas play the most important role, but to “suggest that ideas *as well as* interests have causal weight in explanations of human action” as suggested in the previous intervening variable.²⁴⁷ In other words, just as policy-making elites could be constrained by the systemic environment, their ability to respond to systemic changes could potentially be enhanced or detracted by domestic interest groups. Whether and when domestic interest groups have an enhancing or detracting impact on policy-making is not straight-forward and, as laid out in the methodology section below, very much depends on the

²⁴⁷ Goldstein and Keohane, "Ideas and Foreign Policy," 4-5.

domestic balance of power between the AKP and the opposition as well as the policy at hand in conjunction with the security and economic realities the country is faced with.

The result of this process between the independent and intervening variables is the dependent variable – i.e. the foreign policy outcome, the foreign policy behaviour. Thus the thesis now moves to elaborating on the dependent variable and the variability in TFP between revisionism and *status quo*.

3.2.3. Dependent Variable – Foreign Policy Behaviour

The dependent variable is defined as the various responses, behaviour, or strategies of a state vis-à-vis its external environment. Taliaferro wrote that for his study the dependent variable was “the variation in the types of intensity of the adaptive strategies the state will pursue: emulation, innovation, or persistence in existing strategies.”²⁴⁸ Here, the dependent variable is the variation in TFP behaviour in terms of *revisionism* and *status quo*, along with the subcategories of followed strategies that these two entail.²⁴⁹

Foreign policy behaviour can also be found in the literature as state behaviour. Waltz for example writes that “States may alter their behavior because of the structure they form through interaction with other states.”²⁵⁰ In this context state behaviour is the result of the structure of the international system and the inter-state relations (interaction) within it. Foreign policy is the

²⁴⁸ Taliaferro, "Neoclassical Realism and Resource Extraction: State Building for Future War," 213-14.

²⁴⁹ This approach builds both upon Taliaferro (2009) and Lai, "Nationalism and Power Politics in Japan's Relations with China: A Neoclassical Realist Interpretation," 60-61; Taliaferro, "Neoclassical Realism and Resource Extraction: State Building for Future War."

²⁵⁰ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 93.

means through which a state behaves within the international system and therefore state behaviour and foreign policy behaviour are considered to be the same.

A number of motivations have been considered over the years as foreign policy behaviour changers. More often than not, especially in the realism literature, these motivations are defined by changes in the structure of the international system. Such realist motivations include survival, national security, and more recently in NcR, for example, economic profits. According to Mearsheimer, survival, as the “primary goal” of a state, and other features of the international system (e.g. anarchy, states’ offensive capabilities), lead to three patterns of state behaviour: fear, self-help, and power-maximization.²⁵¹ Power-maximization is ultimately the product of the two former behaviours; fear leads to self-help behaviour which, in turn, leads to power-maximization through various means, as a way of ensuring their survival.

As the father of offensive realism, Mearsheimer essentially maintains that all states seek to maximize their power to turn the structure of the international system in their favour while the ultimate goal of great powers is to become global hegemony. Therefore, all states are revisionist. From this perspective it can be argued that revisionism is itself a form of state behaviour. Revisionism and *status quo* is also the variability in state behaviour that Catherine Combers is concerned with when assessing China’s foreign policy in terms of

²⁵¹ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Powers*: 30-36.

international regimes.²⁵² Given the debate about TFP and the conflicting views in the literature about whether Turkey under the AKP has been following a peaceful and win-win foreign policy of cooperation or an offensive foreign policy of aggression and expansion, this thesis has chosen to look at the variability in TFP outcomes along the lines of revisionist and *status quo* behaviour.

This approach fits the NcR theoretical framework of this thesis. Contrary to neorealism, NcR borrows classical realist assumptions on foreign policy outcomes. Neorealist approaches are divided into two main strands: defensive realism and offensive realism. As already explained offensive realism sees all states as being power-maximizing and revisionist. On the other hand, defensive realists like Waltz, argue that security is the primary aim of states and power is a means of achieving it rather than a goal of its own. As such, according to Waltz, "The first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their position in the system."²⁵³ In that sense, defensive realism sees all states as *status quo* powers.²⁵⁴

Recent efforts to revive classical realism argue that the *status quo* and revisionism bias of offensive and defensive realism is inadequate to understanding change in state behaviour. Classical realism maintains that states may pursue different goals. Specifically, Sten Rynning and Jens Ringsmose

²⁵² Catherine Combes, "Between Revisionism and Status Quo: China in International Regimes. China's Behaviour in the Global Trade, Non-Proliferation and Environmental Regimes," *POLIS Journal* 6(Winter 2011/2012): 4.

²⁵³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 126.

²⁵⁴ See also, Randall L. Schweller, "Neorealism's status-quo bias: What security dilemma?," *Security Studies* 5, no. 3 (1996): 90-121.

write that "Survival is merely one out of several possible state interests that may result in a strategy of either revisionism or the *status quo*."²⁵⁵ This understanding of state motivations and behaviour is in line with NcR's expanded list of state goals and its greater explanatory power as opposed to mere parsimony and grand theorization. What remain to be defined are the concepts of revisionist and *status quo* foreign policy behaviour.

As early as 1948, Morgenthau writes about imperialism referring to what others call revisionism (these terms are elaborated more below).²⁵⁶ According to Morgenthau imperialism, and thus revisionism, is "a policy which aims at the overthrow of the status quo, at the reversal of the power relations between two or more nations." On the contrary, he writes, "A policy seeking only adjustment, leaving the essence of these power relations intact, still operates within the general framework of a policy of the status quo."²⁵⁷ The goals of imperialism are: i) world domination/empire, ii) empire/hegemony of continental dimensions, and iii) localised preponderance of power.²⁵⁸ Moreover, Morgenthau cites three methods of imperialism which can be used either individually or in combination: i) military, ii) economic, and iii) cultural imperialism.²⁵⁹ Other definitions of revisionism are in general agreement with that of Morgenthau. Catherine Combes sees revisionism as the remodelling of

²⁵⁵ Sten Rynning and Jens Ringsmose, "Why are Revisionist States Revisionist? Reviving Classical Realism as an Approach to Understanding International Change," *International Politics* 45(2008): 2, 27.

²⁵⁶ Imperialism, Revisionism and Expansionism are often used interchangeably in the literature. See for example, Schweller, "Neorealism's status-quo bias: What security dilemma?," 107, footnote no. 59.

²⁵⁷ Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948). 27.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 36-38.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 38-42. Mearsheimer mentions three similar means of revisionist policies: economic, diplomatic, and military. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Powers*: 34.

the international system and order “for its own benefit and in its own interests”²⁶⁰ while Mearsheimer, referring to revisionist China, considers the ability to “dictate the boundaries of acceptable behavior to neighboring countries” as revisionism that stems from power-maximization policies.²⁶¹

Taking these definitions into account, and by accepting Morgenthau’s parameters, revisionism is defined as the policy which tries to change regional or international power relations for its own benefit and/or be able to dictate the behaviour of other (regional) states, as Mearsheimer suggests. It has been already seen that Turkey aspires to both of the above at least at the regional level. In addition, the means of revisionist policies suggested by Morgenthau and Mearsheimer are adopted; that is, military, economic, diplomatic and cultural means may be employed for the accomplishment of the above-mentioned revisionist goals. Lastly, the above-mentioned definition is compatible with that of Schweller’s which suggests that “revisionist states value what they covet more than what they currently possess” and that “they will employ military force to change the status quo and to extend their values. For revisionist states, the gains from nonsecurity expansion exceed the costs of war.”²⁶² This corresponds to a number of revisionist strategies as listed below.

A *status quo* foreign policy behaviour on the other hand would be reluctant to follow policies that would disturb or disrupt the balance of power. Instead of trying to increase the state’s power, it would try to preserve it. In

²⁶⁰ Combes, "Between Revisionism and Status Quo," 5.

²⁶¹ John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History* 105, no. 690 (April, 2006): 162.

²⁶² Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 105.

Waltz's words, "The first concern of [*status quo*] states is not to maximize power but to maintain their positions in the system."²⁶³ Further it is suggested that although a state might have revisionist tendencies driven by a revisionist ideology, its foreign policy behaviour is not necessarily revisionist due to external and internal constraints it may be facing.

As mentioned earlier, this kind of variation between revisionist and *status quo* foreign policy behaviour is attributed to the power of domestic variables that play an intervening role between international structural drivers and foreign policy outcomes.²⁶⁴ The intervening role of ideology and domestic interest groups employed in this thesis falls within the framework of other approaches that try to include the unit level in their foreign policy analysis and account for or "explain phenomena that are puzzling from the perspective of" mainstream IR theories, especially the ones that do not take into consideration ideational factors.²⁶⁵

A number of strategies have been explored in the literature that correlate with either revisionist or *status quo* foreign policy behaviour. Drawing largely upon Peter Trubowitz's categorisation,²⁶⁶ revisionist and *status quo* strategies are listed and briefly explained in order to be more easily identifiable later, in the comparative analysis chapter; thus the determination of Turkey's revisionist

²⁶³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 126.

²⁶⁴ See also, Feng Huiyun, "Is China a Revisionist Power?," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2(2009): 317.

²⁶⁵ John S. Duffield, "Political Culture and State Behavior: Why German Conounds Neorealism," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (1999): 765-66.

²⁶⁶ Peter Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy: Partisan Ambition and American Statecraft* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011). 9-16.

and *status quo* tendencies becomes possible.²⁶⁷ It should be noted that the following list is not exhaustive but rather a compilation of strategies that are considered to be relevant to this thesis.

Revisionist Strategies

- Offensive War: Those wars that are fought with the aim of maximizing a state's power or improving its position in the international system through conquest, expansionism and exploitation of foreign resources, are revisionist.
- Expansionism: One of the older strategies for the improvement of a nation's position and power through the expansion of borders and control (sphere of influence). It may involve war but it could also be accomplished through other strategies such as blackmail and intimidation, that is, without the use of military force. Expansionism is also found in the forms of classic imperialism and colonialism or annexation, protectorates, and military bases.²⁶⁸
- Blackmail: In the literature of strategic studies this strategy has also been associated with the concepts of strategic coercion, coercive diplomacy or compellence.²⁶⁹ In short, and in the context of expansionism, blackmail

²⁶⁷ The theoretical discussion about most of these strategies is very big and there is much disagreement, for example, about their frequency, their results, and the conditions under which they occur. This thesis has no intention of resolving these debates here. The strategies and definitions have been selected based mostly on the common definitions in the literature with the aim of providing a working basis for our analysis.

²⁶⁸ Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*: 11; Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*, 4th ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999). 13-43.

²⁶⁹ William H. Kincade, "Arms Control and Arms Coercion," *Foreign Policy* 62(1986); Peter Viggo Jakobsen, "Coercive Diplomacy," in *Contemporary Security Studies*, ed. Alan Collins (Oxford: Oxford

employs coercion, that is, threats of war, to the end of bringing the balance of power to a nation's favour.

- Divide and Rule: This strategy relates to Mearsheimer's suggested strategies of "bait and bleed" and "bloodletting". The former aims to provoke "a long and costly war" between its rivals in order to weaken them. The latter tries to make sure that wars in which adversarial actors are involved in are "protracted and deadly."²⁷⁰ Both blackmail and divide and rule are cheaper than the previously mentioned strategies.
- Subversion: Subversion can refer both to the tactical (battlefield) and (national) strategic level. It is inexpensive and comprised by "espionage and covert operations." This involves intelligence gathering and the "weakening of the enemy by subversion, that is, induced transfer of loyalties." In other words, it aims at rewarding, recruiting or subverting enemy chiefs to the benefit of the subversive nation.²⁷¹ In addition, subversion – or subversive propaganda – could be employed to generate agitation, civil unrest, strikes, and protests. The end goal would be to discredit and demoralise a state thus undermining its government.²⁷² It is here argued that propaganda and political communication tools could be used as subversive strategies to

University Press, 2007); Lawrence Freedman, "Strategic Coercion," in *Strategic Coercion: Concepts and Cases*, ed. Lawrence Freedman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Alexander L. George, "Coercive Diplomacy: Definitions and Characteristics," in *The Limits of Coercive Diplomacy*, ed. Alexander L. George and William E. Simons (Boulder: Westview, 1994); Thomas Shelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966).

²⁷⁰ Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Powers*: 139.

²⁷¹ Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*: 11-12; Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Byzantine Empire* (Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). 63-64.

²⁷² Laurence Beilenson, *Power Through Subversion* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1972). viii; Richard Clutterbuck, *Protest and the Urban Guerrilla* (New York: Abelard Schuman, 1973). 274.

directly discredit and demoralise a state either for domestic or external consumption that would improve the subversive state's position.

- **Bandwagoning for Profit:** While bandwagoning is generally considered to be a *status quo* or defensive strategy (see below), Schweller has made a good case for the "bandwagoning for profit" variant which he sees as revisionist. In a nutshell, Schweller argues that states may not only bandwagon for security, as goes the mainstream understanding, but also for profit. This is the "opportunistic aspect of bandwagoning" since its goal "is usually self-extension." In other words, bandwagoning for profit is to ride "free on the *offensive* efforts of others to gain unearned spoils."²⁷³
- **Balance of Interests:** Although the balance-of-interests theory provides criteria for both *status quo* and revisionist states, this thesis is more concerned with how it applies to the latter. According to Schweller, it has a dual meaning. "At the unit level, it refers to the costs a state is willing to pay to defend its values relative to the costs it is willing to pay to extend its values." Within this framework, there are two kinds of revisionist states – referred to by Schweller as "jackals" and "wolves" respectively. Jackals will pay high costs to defend their possessions but even greater costs to extend their values," while they are "risk averse and opportunistic." Wolves, are predatory states that "value what they covet far more than what they possess" and they are willing to take great risks, often to the extent that they become reckless. In terms of the balance of interests at the systemic level,

²⁷³ Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit," 74-75, footnote no. 11.

relevant to this study may be the fact that “When a revisionist state or coalition is stronger than the defenders of the status quo, the system will undergo change” sooner or later in one way or another.²⁷⁴

- Regime Change: A state’s efforts to pursue change of the regime of other states is similar to and associated with efforts for the territorial alteration of the *status quo*. Yet in this case the gains are not territorial *per se*, as in the case of offensive war or expansionism, but mainly ideological. That is, the change of a country’s regime may be followed by the rise of an ideologically different government which would be either in favour or under the (direct or indirect) control of the undertaking state.²⁷⁵

Status Quo Strategies

- Defensive War: Contrary to offensive wars, defensive wars are those that try to maintain the *status quo*. They are, more often than not, initiated to deal with external aggression and prevent changes in the distribution of power. Pre-emptive wars fall under this category as well.
- Balancing (internal and external): Balancing is one of the most often mentioned strategies. Analysts and IR theorists often refer to it as the most commonly followed strategy, albeit Schweller, among others, argues that it is as common as bandwagoning.²⁷⁶ The aim of balancing is to prevent other

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 99-100, 03-05.

²⁷⁵ Benjamin Miller and Moran Mandelbaum, "Taming the Revisionist State: The Effects of Military Defeats on the War-Proneness of Germany vs. Iraq," *Centre for International Peace and Security Studies Working Paper*, no. 33 (2010): 7.

²⁷⁶ Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit," 72-75.

states from changing the *status quo* at the expense of the defender. This can involve internal (balancing) efforts, namely, leadership decisions to increase the state's (military) capabilities and extract the state's resources to the end of deterring an aggressor or defending itself from it. On the other hand, external balancing refers to defence and deterrence of aggressors through formation of alliances.²⁷⁷ These alliances may be formed to either strike a balance in unfavourable regional or international power relations, as Waltz argued, or balance against threats as Walt later added.²⁷⁸ Both utilities of external balancing are accepted and Walt's explanation of alliance formation, that pays attention to the role of external (common) threats in internal balancing of the formation of an alliance, is adopted.

- Bandwagoning: As per the defensive variant of bandwagoning, it refers to the "strategy by which leaders willingly subordinate their states and themselves to the stronger power, seeing little hope of diffusing the threat posed by the foreign challenger."²⁷⁹ It is, therefore, a security-seeking strategy.
- Soft Balancing: Soft Balancing is a "light" version of the traditional military- or material capabilities-based strategy of balancing. It is a concept which emerged in the context of a unipolar world, with the US being the sole superpower. It refers primarily to efforts by second-tier or second-ranked powers to deal with or constrain the US power. However, these balancing

²⁷⁷ Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*: 12.

²⁷⁸ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*: 118, 66; Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*: 5.

²⁷⁹ Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*: 13.

efforts are “limited, tacit, or indirect” and are pursuit “through coalition building and diplomatic bargaining within international institutions, short or formal bilateral and multilateral military alliances.”²⁸⁰ Robert Pape’s approach is compatible with this and adds means of soft balancing such as economic statecraft and “strict interpretations of neutrality.” Moreover, according to Pape the aim of soft balancing is not to “directly challenge a unipolar leader’s military preponderance, but they can delay, complicate, or increase the costs of using that extraordinary power.”²⁸¹

- Isolationism: Isolationism does not mean diplomatic inactivity but is rather defined as a strategy of “nonexpansion or nonengagement.” Such was the traditional foreign policy orientation of Kemalist Turkey.²⁸²
- Buck-passing: According to Schweller, buck-passing is an under-reaction to threats and a state’s effort to “ride free on the balancing efforts of others.” It involves the formation of loose, or the avoidance of, alliances; limited efforts to “coordinate war plans and to establish a coherent Allied grand strategy;” little military spending in relation to aggressor states; and, the adoption of defensive strategies “with little or no capability to project military power.”²⁸³

These strategies may or may not be found in the AKP’s TFP towards Syria and Israel. Their articulation and explanation sets the criteria based on which it will be later decided which policies of Turkey are revisionist or *status quo*; when

²⁸⁰ T.V. Paul, "Soft Balancing in the Age of U.S. Primacy," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 58-59.

²⁸¹ Robert A. Pape, "Soft Balancing Against the United States," *International Security* 30, no. 1 (2005): 17.

²⁸² Trubowitz, *Politics and Strategy*: 14.

²⁸³ Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power*: 7.

they are so; and which causal chains result (or which factors are at play) in a revisionist or a *status quo* foreign policy. The next sections consider the interplay of the different variables and explain the methods and ways in which they are employed and operationalised in this thesis.

3.2.4. Operationalising the Variables & Propositions

The theoretical framework provides certain guidelines for the research and analysis of the system and unit level. In line with NcR methodology this study “calls for problem-driven research,” but, although it has been argued that deductive analysis is more appropriate for NcR,²⁸⁴ it will be positioned between induction and deduction. In terms of methodology, Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman argue that “Inductive examination may reveal potentially causal processes that the researcher had not theorized a priori.”²⁸⁵ Moreover in induction, “characterization of variance of the dependent and independent variables” should be avoided since it should occur through the analysis and explanation of the cases.²⁸⁶ On the other hand, deduction requires the prior definition of variables “and the types all these variables constitute through all their mathematically possible configurations.”²⁸⁷

As such, and based on the above elaboration of the different variables, it is clarified that this thesis makes limited hypotheses in terms of variance of the independent and dependent variables and the role of domestic variables.

²⁸⁴ Juneau, “Neoclassical Realist Strategic Analysis: A Statement,” 4, 13.

²⁸⁵ Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman, “Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield,” *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 2 (2007).

²⁸⁶ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. 241.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 244.

Rather, it makes a number of propositions according to the theoretical framework, with regard to the operationalisation of the variables and driver causality and hierarchy, as summarised by the following points – categorised under system and unit-level propositions. These propositions are set forth to clarify from the outset the significance and role of each domestic or system-level variable as well as, lay out the drivers' importance and impact on TFP under certain circumstances. Lastly, they break down in more detail the interplay between the different variables and the foreign policy outcomes as outlined in figures I and II.

System-Level Propositions

- TFP drivers (variables) are categorised in three types of hierarchy (see, Figure III, Chapter 8). The first two mainly concern the system-level:
 - the overall hierarchy, in which systemic drivers are primary over domestic drivers;
 - the hierarchy within the category of independent variables where International Power Changes are first, External Threat Perceptions second, and International Economic Interdependency third – as elaborated in the theoretical framework;
- According to the NcR theoretical framework which sets the independent variables as primary to foreign policy-making, it is suggested that change in TFP is induced by changes in the system; specifically, by international power changes (first independent variable).

- As put forth in the analysis of the independent variables, it is expected that the third independent variable (International Economic Interdependence) will not always be affected by changes in the first and second independent variables. As explained, this proposition is based on the fact that Turkish economy has become largely liberalised and decentralised and is therefore less affected by political or security considerations; much like most of the countries of the developed capitalist world.

Unit-Level Propositions

- The third type of the drivers hierarchy concerns the domestic variables:
 - it is maintained that AKP elite ideology will prove to be the domestic driver/variable with the most influence on foreign policy-making because of its position of power (in government) as well as the increasing authoritarian tendencies that the AKP displayed between 2002 and 2013.
 - In addition, it is suggested that public opinion has the potential of being the most influential domestic group (and driver) mainly because Turkey maintains an electoral democracy and thus AKP is not without electoral concerns insofar as it wants to stay in power.
 - Business groups are next in importance because of the AKP's great emphasis on economy.
 - Opposition parties and military elites remain at the bottom of the hierarchy as their role has been largely surpassed by the AKP's great electoral victories and gradual dominance over the state mechanism.

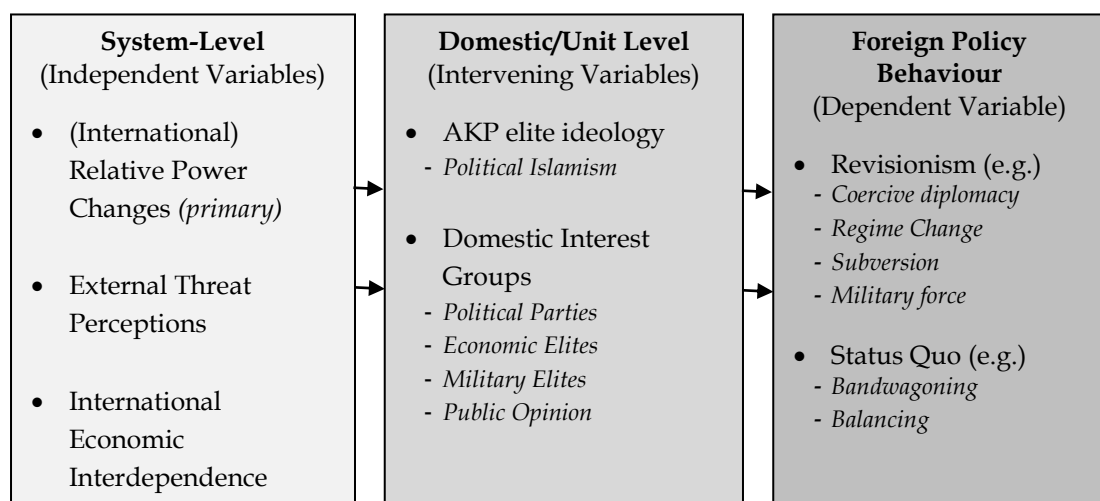
- The AKP elite ideology can be considered as a factor of foreign policy change only in conjunction with systemic changes. In other words, it is maintained that AKP in itself cannot produce change; though the possibility is not explicitly excluded. It is suggested that it can do so only after systemic changes occur which in turn it filters and responds according to understanding and perception of the situation (based on its ideology).
- Taking into account that AKP elite ideology is the most influential intervening variable, it is likely that whenever Turkey is prompted to take a foreign policy decision due to changes in the system-level variables (e.g. international power changes or external threat perceptions), domestic interest groups become either neutralised or supportive of government intentions.
- Given the largely independent role of the third independent role variable (International Economic Interdependence), it is proposed that the absence of political support to business interests (economic interdependencies) does not necessarily hinder them. Similarly, a mismatch in business interests and security considerations may lead the AKP to favour the latter over the former thus ignoring pressures from business elites.

Based on the developed theoretical framework and the above-mentioned propositions, this thesis seeks to analyse each case study in depth, conduct the comparative analysis, and identify the causal pathways between the variables that lead to foreign policy outcomes. This will be instrumental in generating tables that summarize the relationship between the variables. This would also

allow for (limited) generalisations and predictions. In addition, the causal pathways depicted in these tables will also be juxtaposed to counterfactuals. Namely, the foreign policy outcome produced under the AKP period and the causal chains leading to it will be compared to a counterfactual version of what the foreign policy outcome would have looked like under the previous Kemalist-dominated establishment (see, chapter 8). Thereby, change in foreign policy and the drivers prompting it, become clearer.

Figures I and II present the causal relationship between the variables as well as the way they are operationalized. Based on these schemes TFP towards Syria and Israel is analysed, respectively. Then the two cases and the causal pathways that have been identified in Turkish foreign policy-making towards them are compared. This reveals the patterns in Turkish foreign policy-making and ultimately clarifies the importance of each factor and variable.

Figure I
Neoclassical Realist Framework & Turkish Foreign Policy



In particular, Figure I illustrates the general idea behind an NcR framework as well as the specific variables employed in this thesis and the relationship between them. As already highlighted, the external structural environment (system level), and more specifically the anarchy of the international system and relative power changes, has an independent role in influencing foreign policy. It is maintained that these changes have direct impact on, and are sometimes parallel to, the international economic relations of a state and its security threat perceptions towards other states of the system. Therefore these three variables are treated as interlinked and independent – i.e. they affect the intervening variables and ultimately the dependent variable, but are not affected by the intervening variables.

The intervening variables, as elaborated above, are *AKP elite Ideology* and *Domestic Interest Groups*. Regarding the latter, the role of political parties, public opinion, economic elites (in the form of business associations), and military elites are taken into account. In terms of the former, political Islam is considered as the prevalent ideology among the AKP (foreign) policy-making elites. These intervening variables influence foreign policy-making in conjunction with the independent variables. External environment changes may be filtered, translated or interpreted in different ways depending on these domestic pressures, constraints or drivers. Eventually, the relationship between the variables leads to a certain foreign policy behaviour and the adoption of certain policies – the dependent variable. This study is interested in assessing the impact of this process on TFP and the variation in TFP behaviour along the lines

of revisionist and *status quo*; that is, the causal pathways that lead to revisionist or to *status quo* behaviour.

Figure II
Two Models of Causal Relationships between Variables

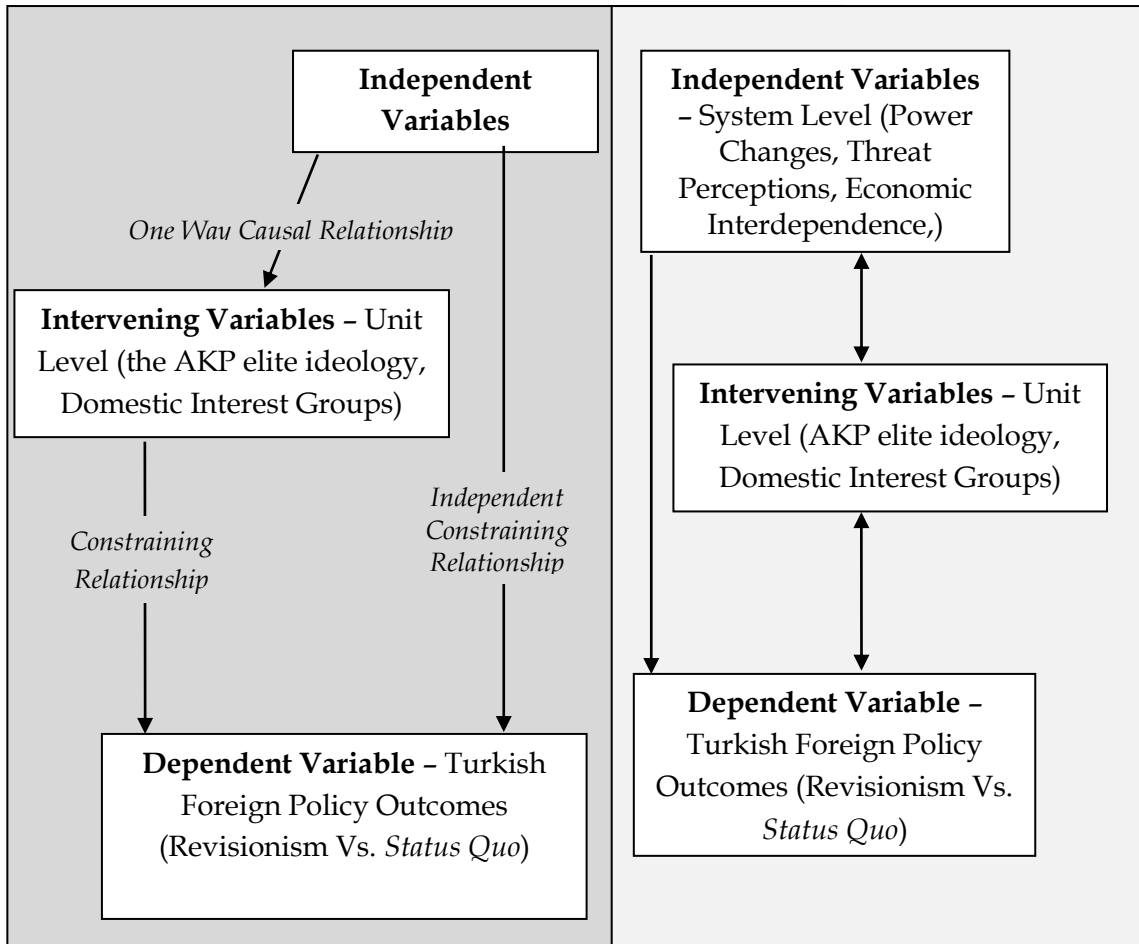


Figure II presents once again, in two alternative ways, the way the independent variables impact foreign policy outcomes, as well as how the intervening variables – i.e. the added value of NcR – have a role to play in the making of the final foreign policy outcome. It should be noted that the causality identified will not always be definitive given that the causal role of some drivers can only be corroborated, for example, by the very elites that took the

decision under examination.²⁸⁸ As mentioned below, acquiring such interviews proved very difficult and thus some of the presented chains may be closer to correlation between drivers and policy outcomes rather than direct causation.

Apart from the theoretical framework and the operationalization of its variables, additional methods need to be employed both for the selection of the case studies and their comparative analysis. The employed methodology is dealt with below in detail.

3.3. Case Studies and Comparative Methods

Three types of methods will be used in conjunction with the theoretical framework in order for the research objectives to be reached: 1) case study method (as part of the “structured, focused comparison method”),²⁸⁹ 2) process-tracing, and 3) a combination of cross-time and cross-case comparison.²⁹⁰ A (qualitative) case study has been defined as “an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources”²⁹¹ as well as “the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to

²⁸⁸ For example, the claim that the AKP has given in to or has taken into account domestic group pressures can be deduced by analysing various factors but can only be confirmed by AKP decision-makers or by first-hand accounts from leaders of the domestic group in question. Although primary and secondary material have allowed for insights especially in terms of domestic interest groups, it has not been possible for AKP elite interviews to be conducted.

²⁸⁹ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. 67-72.

²⁹⁰ Bennett and Elman, "Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield," 176.

²⁹¹ Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack, "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers," *The Qualitative Report* 13, no. 4 (December 2008): 544; see also, John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (May 2004): 341-54.

other events.”²⁹² Both definitions are acceptable as they rather complement each other instead of being mutually exclusive.

Process-tracing is a “within case study” method that is often used by Neoclassical Realists as it “attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and causal mechanism – between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable.”²⁹³ In this case, process-tracing is not utilized for “uncovering traces of a hypothesized causal mechanism” but seeks the inductive examination of causal processes that have not been theorised a priori.²⁹⁴ This is desirable, as the research is situated between induction and deduction, as well as feasible since process-tracing “can involve both inductive and deductive study of events and sequences within a case.”²⁹⁵

As regards the comparative method, Arend Lijphart defined it broadly as “one of the basic scientific methods, not *the* scientific method,” which is responsible for “*discovering empirical relationships among variables.*”²⁹⁶ The same author maintained that the two methods – case study and comparative method – should be closely connected while asserting that “certain types of case studies can even be considered implicit parts of the comparative method.”²⁹⁷ George and Bennet refer to “controlled comparison” – defined as “the study of two or

²⁹² George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. 5.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 206.

²⁹⁴ Bennett and Elman, “Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield,” 183.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁶ Arend Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *The American Political Science Review* 65, no. 3 (1971): 682; see also, Arend Lijphart, “The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research,” *Comparative Political Studies* 8, no. 2 (1975): 158-77.

²⁹⁷ Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” 691.

more instances of a well-specified phenomenon that resembles each other in every respect but one” – as “the best known and still dominant variant of comparative methods.”²⁹⁸

Case studies that are part of a comparative analysis are often chosen based on the dependent variable. This, according to Douglas Dion, is a three step process: 1) the selection of phenomenon to be examined; 2) “gathering data on occurrences of the phenomenon;” and 3) tracing the commonalities between the occurrences.²⁹⁹ Within this framework there are three main comparative research designs that could be followed: 1) the already mentioned “controlled comparison” that refers to the comparison of “most similar” cases studies; 2) the “least similar” comparative design and 3) deviant cases.

The former entails the comparison of cases that are comparable in all respects but the independent variable – which means that the cases may have different outcomes on the dependent variable. The “least similar” design suggests similarity in the outcome of the compared cases, and differentiation in all other respects except for one independent variable.³⁰⁰ The third research design (i.e. “deviant cases”) entails choosing the case studies according to their (common) independent variable while having similar outcomes. Thus the case studies would be deviant if they had different outcomes. Should that happen, argue George and Bennet, “the researcher can perform full studies of these

²⁹⁸ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. 151.

²⁹⁹ Douglas Dion, “Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study,” *Comparative Politics* 30, no. 2 (January 1998): 127.

³⁰⁰ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. 81-82. 252-53.

cases to assess whether and why one of them deviates from the expected outcome;” this could also highlight the need of using additional variables.³⁰¹

However, provided that this is neither a traditional comparative politics analysis nor a comparative foreign policy study – i.e. the comparison of the foreign policies of two or more states – the criteria for the comparison of the cases studies – which in this instance is TFP towards two Middle East states – do not apply. This is because the *cases* do not refer to the countries themselves but to TFP towards them. As TFP has not been characterised by a stable continuity towards Israel and Syria over the past ten years, it is very difficult to be definitive as to whether Turkey has treated these countries “differently” or “similarly”. Therefore, one of the above comparative methods (i.e. “most similar”) will be used for the *cross-time* – or, before and after – comparison of *each* case study, but not for *cross-case study* analysis.³⁰² A limitation with regard to the “after” part of the cases studies (post-2011) is that it is not possible for this thesis to examine “the values of the observed variables...well after [the event],” as the research and most available data are limited to prior to 2013.

By utilising the “before-after” design each case study is practically divided into two sub-case studies which would account for changes in foreign policy outcomes over time. As “only one variable can change at the moment that divides the longitudinal case[s] neatly in two” that variable should be the power-related independent one.³⁰³ That would capture the systemic relative

³⁰¹ Ibid., 252.

³⁰² Bennett and Elman, “Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield,” 176.

³⁰³ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. 166.

power changes in the regional environment of the Middle East that came about with the “Arab Spring”³⁰⁴ (2011).

This means the (geo)political changes of the “Arab Spring” are considered to have altered the international systemic environment.³⁰⁵ Given that, according to the theoretical framework, changes in the international environment constitute an independent variable, then, the “Arab Spring” has also affected the domestic variables thus impacting TFP. These particular changes and their relation with Turkey’s domestic political scene and foreign policy are elaborated upon in the examination of the case studies. After each case has been examined through process-tracing and “before-after” analysis, cross-case analysis follows as already mentioned. As regards the comparison of cases, Bennett and Elman, drawing upon Walt’s study “Revolution and War,” present how cross-case analysis can be flexible by variance both in the independent and dependent variables; this design, as the authors argue, can generate considerable inferential leverage.³⁰⁶ In this instance the cases are based on their empirical value, as seen below.

The following necessary task is for the case studies to be selected. First and foremost the case studies should be relevant “to the research objective of the

³⁰⁴ The term is used in quotation marks because it is not considered to be valid; yet it is used because it is the most popular one.

³⁰⁵ Sinan Ülgen et al., “Emerging Order in the Middle East,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Outlook* (May 2012); Mohammed Ayoob, “The Arab Spring: Its Geostrategic Significance,” *Middle East Policy* XIX, no. 3 (Fall 2012); Katerina Dalacoura, “The 2011 Uprisings in the Arab Middle East: Political Change and Geopolitical Implications,” *International Affairs* 88, no. 1 (2012); Moshe Ma’oz, “The “Arab Spring” and the New Geo-Strategic Environment in the Middle East,” *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 4 (2012); Richard Youngs, “Living with the Middle East’s old-new Security Paradigm,” *FRIDE Policy Brief*, no. 152 (March 2013).

³⁰⁶ Bennett and Elman, “Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield,” 176.

study, whether it includes theory development, theory testing, or heuristic purposes” while opportunism could play a role in the researcher’s selection.³⁰⁷ For this thesis the case studies have to be countries that are part of Turkey’s Middle East foreign policy. The relative power changes in the international system (primary independent variable) to be examined, both regionally and internationally, are the same for both case studies as – geographically – the referent object of this study remains the Turkish state while the timeline of analysis is the same for both case studies (2002-2013).

According to the research design the case studies should help this thesis examine variation in foreign policy outcomes through identifying foreign policy-making drivers. At the same time the theoretical framework will be refined. Provided that two main types of foreign policy outcomes are to be evaluated – *revisionism* and *status quo* – the case studies should allow for examining this kind of variation in foreign policy behaviour. In this regard the selected case studies, Syria and Israel, provide the opportunity of not only analysing a wide spectrum of foreign policy outcomes that fall under the categories of “revisionism” and “*status quo*,” but also observing “before-after” changes within cases over the period of time in question.

Syria, for example, has gone from being a national security threat to Turkey in the late 1990s, to becoming a great economic and trade partner in the 2000s only to go back again into being a security threat with the break-out of the

³⁰⁷ George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. 83.

Arab Uprisings.³⁰⁸ On the other hand the close military and diplomatic ties Turkey had with Israel have seriously deteriorated over the 2000s, although their trade relations increased. Israel has always been a Western ally in the region and Turkish-Israeli close relations were an indication of Turkey's pro-Western commitment.³⁰⁹ However, Turkey's unfriendly stance towards Israel could – at least according to some scholars – be a reflection of its stance towards the West or Western interests in the region; at the same time it could be an indication of its efforts to establish good relations with its Arab/Muslim neighbours, or even of its hegemonic expectations.

Likewise, the shift in Ankara's policy towards Syria in the early 2000s and the strengthened relations of the two countries throughout the last decade have been, for many, an important reflection of the eastward shift in TFP. It should be noted, again, that in terms of comparative methodology Syria and Israel are not classified as "most similar" or "most different" case studies. Their comparison is based on the aforementioned flexible cross-case analysis proposed by Bennett and Elman, and is therefore, empirically selected according to their inferential value. Yet each of the cases remains individually divided into "most similar" cross-time subcases; in this instance "most similar" refers to the country itself, though in different periods. It is also important that

³⁰⁸ Raymond Hinnebusch, "Introduction: The Study of Turkey-Syria Relations," in *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem Tür (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013).

³⁰⁹ For an account of Israel's importance for US foreign policy see, Raymond Hinnebusch, "The US Invasion of Iraq: Explanations and Implications," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): 210-26; *Troubled Triangle: The United States, Turkey, and Israel in the New Middle East*, (Charlottesville, Virginia: Just World Books, 2011).

the periodization used here (2002-2011, 2011-2013) which is based on the events of the “Arab Spring,” may not reveal the same changes in TFP towards both cases, but that would be something to be examined and explained.

The research has been mainly based on empirical evidence gathered from pre-existing academic research (secondary sources), official documents government documents and data, speeches, media and civil society sources, surveys, elite interviews found in the press, as well as personal expert and elite interviews by the author (primary sources). Secondary sources have been mostly used for the historical background, the system level analysis (based on different scholarly accounts of regional and international systemic changes), and as a means of triangulating or enriching primary sources.

Most of the data is used as self-evident – of possibly unknown or not well-known – facts to the end of providing a factual basis for analysis. However, as mentioned above, the data would also need to be triangulated. Therefore, information gathered, for example, from the press, would have to be confirmed and triangulated with other sources such as official documents, different press sources, interviews or secondary sources. At the same time evidence from personal interviews is used as complimentary to other primary and secondary sources. These interviews provide insights on issues related to all variables with regard to both case studies.

Two key obstacles were the (Turkish) language as well as the socio-political situation in the country. The first obstacle has been largely overcome by the large number of English language academic journals on Turkish politics

and the region, important literature in English by Turkish authors, and extensive Greek literature (original or translated form Turkish) on Turkish politics. Lastly, a small number of Turkish sources were translated where needed.

Summary of Part I

Overall, Part I has presented an examination of existing works on TFP and identified some empirical and theoretical gaps which it then proposed to solve to the extent possible through the development of an NcR theoretical framework. It explained how independent (system-level) and intervening (unit level) variables are employed and operationalised to the end of identifying variation in TFP outcomes (revisionism or status quo) and ultimately determining TFP behaviour under the AKP, which, this thesis argues, has been revisionist.

Lastly, chapter 3 elaborated on the different methods that will be employed to complement the theoretical framework and provide more concrete findings. These include the case study method, process-tracing, and the cross-case and cross-time comparative methodologies; at the same time, a combination of secondary and primary material together with elite and expert interviews are employed in the analysis. The thesis continues with Part II and Chapters 4 to 6 which provide an in depth analysis of the independent and intervening variables of TFP towards Syria and Israel, for the 2002-2011 period.

PART II

In accordance with this thesis' methodology and theoretical framework, this part (II) is concerned with the 2002-2011 period while part III looks at the post-2011 period and includes the comparative analysis as well. The first period, as well as the decade under way, have been highly turbulent, especially for the Middle East. In this context, Turkey, which has been going through its own socio-political and ideological transformation, found itself faced with a variety of foreign policy challenges and opportunities. To analyse Turkey's regional foreign policy, and identify its drivers and motivations, the cases of Syria and Israel are looked at through an NcR lens. The ultimate goal is to answer the primary and overarching question: "what are the foreign policy-making dynamics under the AKP, with regard to the Middle East?" In this process other sub-questions will be answered such as "how are domestic developments linked to external developments in TFP?" And, "is Turkey turning away from its traditional Western allies?"

Part II specifically is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter (4) analyses the independent variables for the first period: international relative power changes, economic interdependence, and threat perceptions. After providing the international structural context in which Turkey operated during that period, chapters 5 and 6 deal with the case of Syria and Israel respectively through the intervening variables. Thereby the intervening variables – AKP Ideology and domestic interest groups – are also factored into the analysis in

conjunction with the independent variables so as to lead to conclusions regarding the behaviour of TFP.

The purpose of these chapters is to analyse the role of each variable for the case study in question and to find their role in shaping given foreign policy outcomes. The obvious argument throughout the thesis is that change in TFP is primarily induced by external structural changes. However, it is maintained that under AKP Turkey responds to external structural changes in a different way that it would have under the traditional Kemalist establishment. That is because of the AKP's different ideology and the fact that domestic interests groups have acquired a bigger role in policy-making process as Turkey became more democratic and pluralistic. Yet the AKP's second election to power (2007) and onwards gradually led to a form of authoritarianism as the party and PM Erdoğan consolidated their power. This resulted in a shift with regard to the impact of domestic factors on foreign policy-making; some domestic interest groups became less important while the AKP elite and especially Erdoğan acquired more prominence.

4. Independent Variables and Turkey's Middle East Foreign Policy 2002-2011

This chapter analyses the role of the three independent variables in the making of TFP, as well as their relationship. It starts with the primary independent variable which is international (and regional) power changes. The second section regards external threat perceptions while the third section deals with international economic interdependence. The final section concludes with an account of the role of the independent variables in TFP during the 2002-2011 period.

Four major external, systemic, developments have played a role in influencing TFP, related to international and regional power changes, economic interdependencies and shifting threat perceptions: the 9/11 events and the initiation of Global War on Terrorism with the Afghanistan war in 2001, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the European Union's stance towards Turkey's EU accession progress,³¹⁰ and the global economic crisis. The two wars were largely a product of the (unipolar) international power system that emerged after the

³¹⁰ The change in the EU's stance towards Turkey is not a systemic factor in the traditional sense (i.e. international power changes). Yet, it is often cited in the literature as an external reason of change in Turkish foreign policy, while it has also been mentioned as a factor by the majority of the interviewees. Here, its systemic role is specifically attributed to the traditionally central position that the EU held in Turkish (pro-Western) foreign policy. From that perspective, the EU reflects – at least partly – the dynamic between Turkey and the West as well as Turkey's potential for further integration with the West. Therefore, the loss of EU membership potential, or the decline in EU-Turkey relations, is both external and systemic to Turkish foreign policy. The EU could also be examined as a domestic factor through the lens of "Europeanization"; something that this thesis does not do, and could be seen as a limitation. The notion of the Turkey-EU systemic dynamic has also been supported by academic Dr. Ahmet Sözen (interview with the author, Famagusta, Cyprus, 26 December 2013).

end of the Cold War. Yet the economic crisis could arguably be attributed to the predominance and systemic flaws of Capitalism as well.

4.1. International and Regional Power Changes

The shifting international balances of power after the Cold War became soon a subject of debate. There was some agreement that the post-Cold War order was unipolar, namely, dominated by the sole superpower of the US.³¹¹ Yet some argued that the “unipolar moment” was merely a “moment” which would be followed by the emergence of other powers, the decline of American power, the rise of instability, and ultimately replaced by a multipolar world order.³¹² At least in terms of the 90s and the 2000s, what became evident was the US’s ability to exert its power on a global scale and set the rules of the geopolitical game without any other powers being able to keep it in check.

This reality was clearly reflected in the role that the US and NATO played in the Gulf war of 1991 and the eruptions of conflict in the Balkans throughout the 90s. The Balkan conflicts and the NATO operations in particular revealed the EU’s lack of capacity for crisis and conflict management; a vacuum that NATO, under American leadership, rushed to fill.³¹³ Similarly, with regard to the Gulf war, Charles Krauthammer vividly argued that without the United States, “Nothing would have been done: no embargo, no ‘Desert Shield,’ no

³¹¹ Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990/91): 23-24.

³¹² Christopher Layne, "The Unipoar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise," *international Security* 17, no. 4 (1993): 7-8, 5-51; see also, Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," *International Security* 18, no. 2 (1993): 44-79.

³¹³ Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 22-23.

threat of force. The world would have written off Kuwait the way the last body pledged to collective security, the League of Nations, wrote off Abyssinia.”³¹⁴

In the wake of the twenty-first century the state of the world order was not much different. The same proponent of a sustained US “unipolar moment” emphasised that, regardless of the strengthening of Russia and China in the 90s, the US superiority in material and cultural capabilities was still a fact. The terrorist attacks of 9/11, he argued, and the subsequent reactions of the US, highlighted American power supremacy in three ways: the war in Afghanistan demonstrated the exceptional military capabilities of the US both in operations and deployment; domestic economic and political order was recovered very fast; and the US showed the ability to mobilize international support and broaden its alliances.³¹⁵ Not only that, but these examples also showed the face of a more coercive US empire, as opposed to its previous “hegemony based on consent and shared interests.”³¹⁶

Although ten years or so later these observations could be debated and disputed, it is true that, at the time, the US international position was instrumental in leading to the wars in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), and, therefore, instrumental in the geopolitical changes that followed. Thus, whether unipolar or uni-multipolar,³¹⁷ the US-dominated international power system

³¹⁴ Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," 25.

³¹⁵ Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment Revisited," *The National Interest* (Winter, 2002/03): 7-8.

³¹⁶ Raymond Hinnebusch, "The Iraq War and International Relations: Implications for Small States," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2006): 461.

³¹⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower," *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 1 (1999): 35-36.

had a crucial impact on the stability and balances of power of the Middle East and, by extension, on TFP.

Bulent Aras and Şule Toktaş argue that “the impact of the new wave of international terrorism and the subsequent global war on terror have divided the world into two zones, the peace zone and the war zone.” The peace zone includes Western and pro-Western countries that are subject to terrorist attacks from actors in the war zone.³¹⁸ This division³¹⁹ along with the uses and abuses of Islam in Western discourse put most of the Muslim – and developing – world under the spotlight; both in terms of its negative politico-economic situation and its cultural identity.

In this context, Turkey as a traditional pro-Western country became a target of Islamic fundamentalism while, as a Muslim-majority Western ally, it became a valuable asset in the US’s war on terror. As such, the “moderate interpretation of Islam and the development of secularism in Turkey” could play a role in limiting the emergence of extremist Islamic worldviews, by providing a West-friendly and more moderate alternative ideology and political system.³²⁰

Within this framework, the distribution of power in the international system, which favoured the US, had an impact on world politics through the

³¹⁸ Bulent Aras and Şule Toktaş, "Al-Qaida, 'War on Terror' and Turkey," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 5 (2007): 1034.

³¹⁹ This thesis does not necessarily agree with the division of the world into these two very narrowly defined “zones” – indeed, one could argue that there are many conceptual problems with this understanding. Yet it is a useful depiction of the aftermath of 9/11 which illustrates the Western perception of the Muslim/third world (“war zone”) and could explain the policies adopted by the West in dealing with it, as well as the role of Turkey.

³²⁰ Aras and Toktaş, "Al-Qaida, 'War on Terror' and Turkey," 1042, 35-36, 40-41.

elevation of Islamism and Islamic extremism to a global security threat, thereby strengthening the alliance between the West and Turkey, increasing the geostrategic significance of Turkey for the West, as well as rendering Islamic terrorism as a security threat to Turkey. Ultimately, this helped Turkey to retrieve the role it had for the West – which was lost after the end of the Cold War – while, as a consequence of the Iraq war and as seen below, many of its threat perceptions changed as well.

The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 had an even greater impact on TFP. Apart from the difference of opinion among NATO and EU member-states regarding the invasion as it was not supported by the United Nations, the Iraq war revealed the divergence in regional interests between the US and Turkey while it unleashed competing geopolitical and sectarian dynamics.

Among the important structural changes³²¹ that the Iraq war brought about were, the transfer of regional power from Arab states to non-Arab states (i.e. Iran, Turkey, the US and Israel), the enabling of outside powers (e.g. Russia and China) to exert power over the region, the increase of Iran's – and its Shiite networks – influence, the exacerbation of the Kurdish issue, the alteration of threat perceptions, and the re-configuration of regional alliances and economic cooperation. Most of these changes were the product of the destruction of the Iraqi state, one of the most powerful and historically pivotal states in the

³²¹ Louise Fawcett, "Regional Order in the Middle East," in *Beyond Iraq: The Future of World Order*, ed. Amitav Acharya and Hiro Katsumata (Singapore: World Scientific, 2011), 59-64.

international politics of the Middle East, and the object of the US's "dual containment" strategy – along with Iran – since the early 90s.³²²

More specifically, the US invasion empowered the Kurds of northern Iraq thus giving rise to a new regional power pole, one that Turkey was already concerned with. In terms of the regional power balance, this development enhanced the US-Israel relative power weight vis-à-vis Turkey's position as the US filled the power vacuum in Iraq between 2003 and 2011 and became a "de facto regional power."³²³

Further, the instability within the country, and the US's failure to pacify Iraq, allowed in due course for external powers such as Iran and Turkey to become involved in domestic politics claiming shares of the political influence over the new Iraq. The rise of a Shiite government in Baghdad gave a push to Iran's plans in the country, upgraded its regional power position, and thus also changed the power balances with regard to the regional Shiite-Sunni axis. In short, the big winner of the Iraq war has been Iran, and by extension Lebanese Hezbollah and Palestinian Hamas, especially after the withdrawal of American troops.

Moreover, the strengthening of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Kurdish-dominated Northern Iraq had worried Turkey, Iran, as well as Syria,

³²² Ibid.; Raymond Hinnebusch, "The American Invasion of Iraq: Causes and Consequences," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2007): 20-23; See also, Louise Fawcett, "The Iraq War ten Year on: Assessing the Fallout," *International Affairs* 89, no. 2 (2013).

³²³ Frederic Wehrey et al., *The Iraq Effect: The Middle East after the Iraq War* (Santa Monica, Arlington, Pittsburgh: RAND, 2010). 19.

due to its connection to the transnational Kurdish separatist threat.³²⁴ These power changes shaped Turkey's Middle East policy in the 2000s to a large extent and had direct implications for the rise of and changes in regional threat perceptions, including Turkey's.

4.2. External Threat Perceptions

According to remarks by Turkey's Foreign Minister (FM), Ahmet Davutoğlu, the 9/11 events were the second "geopolitical earthquake" of the post-Cold War era – the first being the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the third being the "Arab Spring."³²⁵ As such, the Iraq war was a geopolitical aftershock that, according to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, has affected Turkey "more than any other country in the region," thus rendering the "restoration of security and stability in Iraq" one of the top "priorities of Turkish foreign Policy."³²⁶

Walt cites four factors that can affect the threat perceptions of states: aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions. Turkey's, as well as other states' of the region, altered threat perceptions in the 2000s largely reaffirm Walt's realist thesis.³²⁷ The situation in

³²⁴ Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, "The Kurds and Regional Security: An Evaluation of Developments since the Iraq War," *Crown Center for Middle East Studies Middle East Brief*, no. 14 (2006): 1-2.

³²⁵ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Address by Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey at the 2nd Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Istanbul," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (29/06/2013), http://www.mfa.gov.tr/address-by-mr_-ahmet-davuto%C4%9Flu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-turkey-at-the-22nd-annual-session-of-the-osce-parliamentary-assembly_-%C4%B0stanbul_-29-june-2013.en.mfa.

³²⁶ "Relations between Turkey and Iraq," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-iraq.en.mfa>.

³²⁷ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*: 21-26.

Iraq was clearly threatening to Turkey, while the close geographical proximity and the Kurdish element³²⁸ were two of the reasons the Turkish parliament did not allow the US to open another front to the war by sending troops through Turkish territories into Iraq.³²⁹ The American stance made Turkey aware and suspicious of the US goals in the region which seemed to be incompatible with its own interests. Within this framework Turkey felt compelled to pursue a more active regional policy in order to deal with its insecurities and the broader instability.

A basic pillar of this foreign policy was the deepening of relations with Iran and Syria, two states that “were listed by the US State Department as ‘states sponsoring terrorism’.”³³⁰ Kurdish nationalism brought the three countries together while Turkey and Iran also had military cooperation to contain the operations of the PKK and the Iranian Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK) in Northern Iraq and beyond. Specifically, Turkey and Iran signed a

³²⁸ The conceptualization of the Kurdish issue as a security threat is complex. That is because it is a problem which transcends national boundaries. As such, it can be a domestic, a transnational as well as an international security threat. Here, it is looked at as an external issue of security; namely, an element which has been employed as a tactic of foreign policy by different states – e.g. Syria and Iran – against Turkey. Similarly, Turkey’s foreign policy towards the states of its immediate neighbourhood depends largely on their treatment or mistreatment of their Kurdish populations for domestic instability regarding the Kurds abroad could spill over into Turkey. In this sense, the US’s effort to divide Iraq falls into the framework of Turkey’s security threats towards the US (and Israel) that was playing a role in giving rise to a threatening situation for Turkey. The theoretical framework of this thesis does not account for the transnational character of the Kurdish issue – a limitation which could be addressed in a different research.

³²⁹ Ayla Göl, “Iraq and world order: A Turkish perspective,” in *The Iraq Crisis and World Order: Structural, Institutional and Normative Challenges*, ed. Ramesh Thakur and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu (Tokyo, New York, Paris: United Nations University Press, 2006), 116-17.

³³⁰ Fawcett, “The Iraq War ten Year on,” 332.

security agreement during a visit of Turkish Prime Minister (PM), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in 2004, which referred to the PKK as a terrorist organization.³³¹

Similarly Syria, which had its own Kurdish problem and dealt with a Kurdish uprising in 2004, supported Turkey's operations against the PKK in Northern Iraq, in 2007.³³² In addition to Turkey's rapprochement with Iran and Syria, it also developed better relations with non-state actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah, as it aimed at becoming a regional peace broker and mediator. Hamas's leader, Khaled Meshaal, in particular, visited Ankara in February, 2006, and had a meeting with then Turkish FM, Abdullah Gül. Although the visit was attributed to a request from Hamas and Turkey's efforts to mediate between Israel and the Palestinians, the United States and Israel were obviously concerned.³³³ It is evident, and thus safe to argue, that Turkey's threat perception of the US involvement in Iraq, as well as the transnational Kurdish security threat, led Syria, Iran and Turkey to the formation of an alliance that would balance against these threats.

At the same time, other regional developments affected Turkish-Israeli relations as well. In 2004, Israeli military operations in Gaza caused the fury of Turkish PM who refused an invitation to visit Israel, at least seemingly for humanitarian and moral reasons. In an interview with an Israeli newspaper he

³³¹ Stephen F. Larrabee, "Turkey Rediscovers the Middle East," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 4 (2007): 107-08.

³³² Gary C. Gambill, "The Kurdish Reawakening in Syria," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* 6, no. 4 (2004), http://www.meforum.org/meib/articles/0404_s1.htm; Andrew E. Kramer, "Iraq President Assails Syria's Support for Turkish Cross-Boarder Threat," *New York Times* (21/10/2007), <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/21/world/middleeast/21iraq.html>.

³³³ Amberin Zaman, "Turkey Allows Hamas Visit," *Los Angeles Times* (17/02/2006), <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/feb/17/world/fg-hamas17>.

described Israel's actions as "state terrorism," and referred to Palestinians as "the victims" who "the people of Israel are treating ...as they were treated 500 years ago. Bombing people – civilians – from helicopters, killing people without any considerations – children, women, the elderly – razing their buildings using bulldozers."³³⁴ Moreover, Israel's wars in Lebanon (2006) and Gaza (2008/09) drove Ankara to perceive "Israeli policy as deepening instability in the region and thus threatening its vision and policies."³³⁵ Israel had thus come to constitute a security threat for Turkey.

Particularly after the Gaza war, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, 2009, PM Erdoğan walked out on Israeli President Shimon Peres, in protest at being allowed to speak for less time than him. He did so after having remarked: "I find it very sad that people applaud what you said. You killed people. And I think that it is very wrong."³³⁶ At the end of the previous year, against the backdrop of Ankara's efforts to mediate between Syria and Israel, the Turkish PM also said that Israel's actions disrespected Turkey.³³⁷ The PM's remarks and behaviour demonstrate the AKP elite perception of Israel as a hostile state; hostile and disrespectful to Turkey, to regional security and stability, as well as

³³⁴ Hanoch Marmari, "Turkish PM: Israel treating Palestinians as they were treated [Interview]," *Haaretz*(03/06/2004), <http://www.haaretz.com/news/turkish-pm-israel-treating-palestinians-as-they-were-treated-1.124236>.

³³⁵ Meliha Benli Altunışık, "Explaining the Transformation of Turkish-Syrian Relations: A Regionalist Approach," in *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem Tür (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 184.

³³⁶ "Turkish PM storms off in Gaza row," *BBC News*(29/01/2009), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/davos/7859417.stm>.

³³⁷ "Turkish PM condemns 'ruthless' Israel offensive," *Middle East Online*(31/12/2008), <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=29472>.

to Turkey's (Arab) neighbours which – as seen later – are seen by Turkey as “brothers.”

Turkey's threat perceptions of Israel were not eased by other actions or policies throughout the decade. For example, Israel's developed relations with and support to the Iraqi Kurds after 2003 were unquestionably one of the central issues – as a product of the aforementioned external and systemic changes – that had set the foundations for the greater concerns of Ankara that followed.³³⁸

A record low in the bilateral relations of the two countries was reached with the *Mavi Marmara* incident in 2010, when Israeli commandos raided the “Gaza flotilla” which was trying to break the embargo and carry humanitarian aid to Gaza, and killed eight Turkish and one Turkish-American citizens. A little more than a year later the Turkish FM remarked: “There is an irreversible truth: And that is, the fact that attacking civilians in a ship part of an aid convoy, firing multiple times at unarmed people at the back of their neck is a crime against humanity.”³³⁹ In the meanwhile, the Turkish-Syrian military drill in 2009 showed that³⁴⁰ Turkey's relations with its Arab neighbours had already improved. As a consequence, the Turkish-Israeli strategic alliance had already

³³⁸ Sergey Minasian, “The Israeli-Kurdish Relations,” *21st Century* 1(2007): 26-27; Yossi Melman, “Source: Turkey worried Israel's support waning over Kurd issue,” *Haaretz*(27/12/2007), <http://www.haaretz.com/news/source-turkey-worried-israel-s-support-waning-over-kurd-issue-1.235994>.

³³⁹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Press statement by H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, regarding Turkish-Israeli relations,” *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (02/09/2011), http://www.mfa.gov.tr/press-statement-by-h_e_-mr_-ahmet-davutoglu_-minister-of-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-turkey_-regarding-turkish-israeli-re.en.mfa.

³⁴⁰ Selcan Hacaoglu, “Turkey, Syria conduct military drill,” *The Seattle Times*(27/04/2009), http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2009128698_apeuturkeysyria.html.

lost much of its momentum.³⁴¹ This – along with the developed threat perceptions – enabled Turkey to adopt a harsher stance towards Israel.

Moreover, Turkey's developing opposition to Israel's policies and its support for the Palestinians was influenced by two more external dynamics: developments in the country's EU accession process and the fact that Iran had become a prominent advocate of the Palestinians thus becoming attractive among Arab states. Regarding the latter, Iran's support of the Palestinians was not new, but rather a trend since the 1979 revolution and the regime change in Iran. Yet, the Arab world, and its perceptions of Turkey, have become more important for Turkish elites since the election of the pro-Islamist AKP. Indeed, by 2010 Turkey's policies bore fruit as Arab peoples saw Turkey more positively than Iran while, importantly enough, the Israel-Palestine conflict was seen by Arabs as the most urgent issue.³⁴²

Although Turkey and Iran had developed strong relations in the 2000s, the balance between them remained fragile as the two countries have had a long history of regional hegemonic rivalry while Turkey's efforts to mediate between Iran and the international community for the management of the former's nuclear program, stems partly from its own insecurities about a regional nuclear arms race.³⁴³ In this context, Iran's growing influence over Iraq and its

³⁴¹ Soli Özel, "Reshuffling the Cards: Turkey, Israel, and the United State in the Middle East," in *Troubled Triangle: The United States, Turkey, and Israel in the New Middle East*, ed. William B. Quandt (Charlottesville: Just World Books, 2011), 51.

³⁴² Mensur Akgün et al., *The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East 2010* (Istanbul: TESEV, 2011). 9-10.

³⁴³ Nurşin Ateşoğlu Güney, "Turkish Nuclear Security after Iranian Nuclearization," *Contemporary Security Policy* 33, no. 3 (2012): 512-29; Colin H. Kahl, Melissa G. Dalton, and Matthew Irvine, *Atomic Kingdom: If Iran Builds the Bomb, Will Saudi Arabia Be Next?* (Washington: Center for A New American Security, 2013).

positive image in the Arab world regarding its support of the Palestinian issue through its alliance with Syria,³⁴⁴ have also been worrying for Turkey. As such, deeper relations had to be developed with the Arab states as it was a matter of successful regional policy for Turkey; the Palestinian cause was a means of accomplishing that. In this respect, the Davos Forum incident and Erdoğan's reaction could have been caused by both Turkey's effort to increase its popularity in the Arab world as well as its growing threat perceptions of Israel.

Moreover, the stalemate in Turkish-EU relations and Ankara's disappointment over the decreasing possibilities for a full accession into the EU reinforced TFP orientation towards the Middle East. The open-ended framework for accession negotiations which was introduced by the EU after 2004 discouraged Ankara, which saw its negotiations with the EU as never-ending, and it quickly demonstrated unwillingness to further commit to the EU's conditionality for accession. Consequently the EU officially expressed its own disappointment in 2006 thus hinting to its own low commitment to Turkey's accession as well.³⁴⁵

The result was a shift in Turkey's relations with the EU and its neighbourhood as well. For example, while its trade and diplomatic movement vis-à-vis the Arab world was on the rise, the exact opposite was happening in these sectors vis-à-vis the EU.³⁴⁶ Moreover, Turkish leaders adopted a rather

³⁴⁴ Altunışık, "Explaining the Transformation of Turkish-Syrian Relations," 183.

³⁴⁵ Mehmet Ugur, "Open-Ended Membership Prospect and Commitment Credibility: Explaining the Deadlock in EU-Turkey Accession Negotiations," *Journal of Open Market Studies* 48, no. 4 (2010): 979-81.

³⁴⁶ Habibi and Walker, "What Is Driving Turkey's Reengagement with the Arab World?."

hostile stance towards the EU especially with regard to the country's European prospect. For example, in one of many such occasions Turkey's then Minister of EU affairs, Egemen Bağış, known for his provocative remarks, stated that "Turkey doesn't need the EU, the EU needs Turkey. If we have to, we could tell them 'Get lost, kid!'."³⁴⁷

Although the EU was never perceived as a security threat *per se*, and Turkey has not abandoned its efforts for full membership, the damaged dynamic of the country's European prospect threatened Turkey's pro-Western orientation, exacerbated its identity crisis,³⁴⁸ and thus played a role in its increased focus on the Middle East and the Muslim world more generally. Further, the perceptions about the transnational Kurdish threat, Israel, and the US's role in Iraq, influenced Turkey's Middle East policy greatly during the 2000s. Lastly, Ankara's need to keep the threat of the Iranian regional influence and nuclear program in check also had an impact on its foreign policy-making. It is important that these changes in international relative power and threat perceptions did not leave Turkey's regional and international economic interdependencies unaffected. As demonstrated below, economy holds a central role in the AKP's foreign policy and, therefore, international economic relations were another important – external – foreign policy driver.

³⁴⁷ "Minister Bağış: If necessary, Turkey will tell EU to get lost," *Today's Zaman* (19/06/2013), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-318693-minister-bagis-if-necessary-turkey-will-tell-eu-to-get-lost.html>; See also, "Erdoğan lashes out at EU for keeping Turkey at door for decades," *Today's Zaman* (30/09/2013), http://www.sundayszaman.com/sunday/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=223055.

³⁴⁸ For Turkey's identity crisis see, Yüvğil Bozdağlıoğlu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Turkish Identity: A Constructivist Approach* (New York & London: Routledge, 2003). 92-96.

4.3. International Economic Interdependence

The geopolitical shifts in the Middle East after 2001, damaged Turkey-EU relations, while the global financial and economic crisis that broke out in 2007³⁴⁹ played a role in the calculations of the AKP's foreign policy towards the Middle East and beyond. A change in Turkey's foreign economic relations with the Arab world became evident as early as 2003 when a significant increase both in exports and imports was witnessed in relation to previous years. Although at the same time Turkey's global balance of trade deteriorated, it still maintained a surplus in its trade with the Arab world. Importantly, the Arab world shares of Turkish exports rose from 9% in 2002 to 20.7% in 2009; a rise was also noted in the shares of other Muslim-majority countries in Central Asia as well.³⁵⁰ This trend after the rise of the AKP to power highlights an increasing Turkish interest in growing economic relations with the region.

The EU has not stopped being Turkey's most important trade partner, but there has been a notable decline in its shares of Turkish exports since 2003, and particularly after 2008 when the EU economy took a hit from the global economic crisis. However, as noted earlier, during the same years (2003 to 2009) there was an increase in the Arab world's shares of Turkey's exports.

³⁴⁹ It has also been suggested that the economic crisis was the primary reason behind Ankara's economic shift towards the Middle East. Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013.

³⁵⁰ Habibi and Walker, "What Is Driving Turkey's Reengagement with the Arab World?," 2-3.

Overall, the Muslim neighbourhood's share of exports rose to 26% by 2009 while the EU's dropped below 50%.³⁵¹

In terms of the countries that this thesis is concerned with, Turkey's overall volume of trade with Syria went from 671,046 thousand dollars in 1998 to 796,667 in 2006 and 2,297,098 in 2010. Turkish-Israeli economic relations have been excellent since the mid-90s, while under the AKP Turkey's exports of goods to Israel reached 2.3 billion dollars in 2012, a 189% increase from 2001. Accordingly, the total bilateral trade went from 1.2 billion dollars in 2001 to 4.44 billion dollars in 2011, despite the general deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations.³⁵² Another example, which is also important for Turkey's relations with Syria and Israel, is that of Iran. The volume of bilateral trade between Iran and Turkey reached 10.6 billion dollars in 2010 from 1.2 billion in 2001. Moreover it is worth noting that "90% of Turkey's imports from Iran is composed of petroleum, natural gas and its derivatives."³⁵³

With regard to the case of Syria, Tür notes that economic relations have not been limited to trade "but also manifest in increases in investment,

³⁵¹ Ibid., 3-4.

³⁵² Statistics acquired from "Foreign Trade Statistics," *Turkish Statistical Institute*, http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1046; and, "Free Trade Agreements," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy*, <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=tradeagreements&bolum=fta&country=IL&r>. See also, Soner Çağaptay and Tyler Evans, "The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade Relations," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Research Notes* 16(June, 2012); and, Özlem Tür, "The Political Economy of Turkish-Syrian Relations in the 2000s - The Rise and Fall of Trade, Investment and Integration," in *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem Tür (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 162-65.

³⁵³ "Turkey - Iran Relations," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-iran-relations.en.mfa>.

especially Turkish investment in Syria.”³⁵⁴ This is the case with most of the other countries of the region as well. In Israel, Turkish companies have invested great amounts while many Turkish contractor companies have undertaken big projects of large cumulative value. The downside of these relations between Turkey and Israel was the decline in Israeli tourist visits in Turkey, as a result of the “Mavi Marmara” incident (2010).³⁵⁵ In general, Turkish economic relations with the region, and their role in the country’s foreign policy, were made clear in an interview statement by the Foreign Minister:

Our foreign policy is also shaped by our economic interests. Turkey has a big population, young people constituting half of it, and a vibrant economy... Additionally, the Turkish private sector is very active and has a strong entrepreneurial spirit. This requires us to widen the scope of our outreach as an economic actor. Increasing the level of economic cooperation with as many countries as possible becomes an important priority for Turkey. It compels us to reach out and enhance the scope of our relations on a global scale.³⁵⁶

Turkey’s economic interdependencies that have developed or advanced during the 2000s³⁵⁷ reflect the impact of geopolitical changes in the Middle East, the extent to which Turkish policies are pragmatic, as well as the increased role of domestic business groups. On the one hand for example, because of the threat perceptions that emerged particularly after the Iraq war, Turkey ignored

³⁵⁴ Tür, "The Political Economy of Turkish-Syrian Relations in the 2000s," 162.

³⁵⁵ Çağaptay and Evans, "The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade Relations," 3.

³⁵⁶ Scott MacLeod, "The Cairo Review Interview: Strategic Thinking [Ahmet Davutoğlu]," *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, <http://www.aucegypt.edu/gapp/cairoreview/pages/articleDetails.aspx?aid=143>.

³⁵⁷ Specifically, Turkey signed a large number of economic, trade and investment agreements with Syria and Iran between 2003 and 2010. These are mentioned and analysed in more detail below.

US disapproval and opposition to its deepening relations with Syria, and then Turkish President, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, visited Syria in 2005.

In the second half of the 2000s, and especially in 2009, Turkish-Syrian relations boomed, with the establishment of the Turkish-Syrian Regional Cooperation Program, the signing of a Free Trade Agreement, a technical military cooperation agreement, the establishment of the Turkish-Syrian High Level Strategic Cooperation Council, and the lifting of visa requirements.³⁵⁸ On the other hand, the fact that Turkey maintained good – and notably, increasing – economic relations with Israel, at the same time that their bilateral political and diplomatic relations were deteriorating, shows that the AKP's foreign policy towards the Middle East is at least partly in agreement with domestic business and private economic interests as well as that it relies largely on pragmatism; yet, it is not limited to that. The complexity of this claim becomes clearer when one takes into account the intervening variables. The argument is that TFP is neither always nor only pragmatic (i.e. based on material interests).

4.4. Independent Variables and AKP's Middle East Foreign Policy

This chapter analysed the three independent variables for the post-9/11 period: international power changes, external threat perceptions, and international economic interdependence. A causal relationship has been identified between them with power changes affecting threat perceptions and, in turn, international economic interdependencies. It has been identified that

³⁵⁸ Özlem Tür, "Turkish-Syrian Relations - Where are we Going?," *UNISCI Discussion Paper* 23(May, 2010): 169-75.

the events of 9/11 and especially the Iraq war that followed had a great impact on the regional balances of power and Turkey's threat perceptions thus greatly influencing the AKP's foreign policy. They led Turkey to give more emphasis on its relations with its immediate – and often anti-Western – neighbourhood (e.g. Syria and Iran) at the expense of relations with its traditional Western partners and the EU.

A similar conclusion to those of this chapter was reached by Nader Habibi and Joshua Walker. Specifically, they argue that the AKP's foreign policy towards the Arab world has been driven both by pragmatic interests and a "strong Islamic sentiment."³⁵⁹ As the analysis of the independent variables shows, geopolitical shifts, changes in international and regional relative power relations, international threat perceptions, and economic interdependencies informed the foreign policy-making of the AKP during the 2000s. The "strong Islamic sentiment" Habibi and Walker refer to is seen below in the analysis of the domestic variables. Although all of these system-level variables have an independent impact on Turkey, a causal relationship can be identified among them; this contributes to the understanding of other works – such as that of Habibi and Walker – that merely identify pragmatic foreign policy drivers on the system level (e.g. economic relations).

In other words, the state of the international power system in the wake of the twenty first century played a determining role in the West's policies of intervention, both in Afghanistan and Iraq. Particularly the war in Iraq shifted

³⁵⁹ Habibi and Walker, "What Is Driving Turkey's Reengagement with the Arab World?," 6.

the regional balance of power within a very short time, by overthrowing the regime and, by extension, helping Iranian influence to grow, among other results. Moreover, the changing balance of power dictated the re-configuration of regional alliances in order for Turkey, and other countries, to balance against power changes and rising threats, not least of which was the Kurdish militia group, the PKK, and its affiliates. In turn, the changing alliances and the growing common interests between certain countries of the region, led to deeper economic integration and interdependency.

Yet, as it occurs from the above, the external environment has not been the only driver of TFP under the AKP as certain paradoxes and questions stand out in the analysis of the independent variables: for example, why did regional power changes or threat perceptions not lead Turkey to bandwagon with the US, as has been the usual case? Why has the AKP reacted so aggressively and undiplomatically to the policies of Israel which was a valuable strategic partner? How has ideology contributed to these paradoxes? Why does Davutoğlu say that economy is so important, and how has that affected Turkey's outlook? These are some of the issues to be addressed through the analysis of the intervening variables.

As already seen, FM Davutoğlu pointed to domestic factors that drive foreign policy as well, and particularly Turkey's foreign economic relations. In addition, in the case of Israel, for example, the economic interdependence was not paralleled by stable and positive diplomatic and security relations. This shows that, as proposed in the beginning and for reasons explored below,

economic interdependence is not necessarily affected by changes in power relations or external threat perceptions.

At the same time, Turkey's rapidly increasing relations with Syria since 1998 and especially since the rise of the AKP to power, often at the expense of its relations with the West, cannot be solely explained based on regional geopolitics and power shifts. Therefore, the following – more detailed – analysis of TFP towards Syria and Israel, takes into account what has been already analysed and incorporates intervening variables to reach a more comprehensive conclusion on which causal chains lead to variation in the foreign policy behaviour of Turkey (dependent variable).

5. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Syria and Intervening Variables

The first case study to be examined is Syria and TFP towards it. The objective is to identify the domestic factors that, in conjunction with the independent variables, drive the AKP's foreign policy. Provided that NcR goes beyond security concerns, the focus is both on economic and security issues. The economic policies of the AKP towards Syria are examined first, followed by an analysis of Iran's role in Turkey's Syria policy between 2002 and 2011, as a matter of security policy. The analysis is broken down into two sections for each issue, according to the intervening variables: *AKP elite ideology* is first looked at and then the role of *domestic interest groups*.

5.1. Domestic Drivers and Turkey's Economic Policies towards Syria

Two of the most remarkable achievements of Turkish-Syrian cooperation were the signing of a Free Trade Agreement (2004) and the abolishment of visa requirements for travel (2009). As demonstrated, this is largely a product of external developments in the Middle East, although the rapprochement of the two countries begun from 1998. These developments stemmed from the US invasion of Iraq, the empowerment of the Kurds and the exacerbation of the threat of Kurdish separatism in Turkey and beyond; also, the overall regional instability due to the war and the upgrading of Iran especially as the US troops started withdrawing.

To be sure, Turkey's Syria economic policy was not an isolated reality. Rather, it was part of a greater economy-based foreign policy orientation in the region, which also included states like Lebanon and Jordan, aimed at establishing an economic zone of free trade.³⁶⁰ After all, in 2007 Davutoğlu did say that, "Turkey's level of relations with Syria today stands as a model of progress for the rest of the region."³⁶¹

This TFP behaviour is important, given that Turkey's traditional ally, the US, has been maintaining a hard stance against Syria. In this light, Turkey's indifference for American regional policies, and its unwillingness to bandwagon with the US at the crucial geopolitical juncture of the post-Iraq war period, as it would normally do, points to decision-making that may have also been informed by domestic realities.

1st Intervening Variable: the AKP Elite Ideology

It is widely acceptable that the rise of the AKP to power has been a factor with a serious impact on TFP. That is because of the party's ideology, which differed from the traditional Kemalist one. However, not everyone agrees that ideology is driving the AKP's foreign policy. In 2008, the Chief Advisor to Prime Minister Erdoğan, İbrahim Kalın, wrote that,

³⁶⁰ "Turkey, Arab neighbors gear up for Mideast free trade zone," *Today's Zaman* (27/09/2010), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-222767-102-turkey-arab-neighbors-gear-up-for-mideast-free-trade-zone.html>.

³⁶¹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007," *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 1 (January, 2008): 80.

While ideological preferences have kept Turkey away from playing any significant role in Middle Eastern affairs for a long stretch, geo-political considerations are inviting it back to the backyard of the Ottoman Empire. It is not so much ideology as geo-political necessity that drives Turkey today to engage with a multitude of regions from the Balkans to the Middle East.³⁶²

Yet, one can also identify geopolitical necessities and regional challenges to Turkey's security and economy throughout the twentieth century. If – Kemalist – ideology prevented Turkey from engaging these issues in the past – not without exceptions – it would only be logical to also assume that the ideological change which came about with the rise of the AKP, played a role in Turkey's increasing focus on the Middle East. And although Davutoğlu rejected both a “neo-Ottoman” vision and an Islamic foreign policy,³⁶³ he argued, at the beginning of the millennium, that the increasing importance of the feeling of belonging to a civilization and culture will affect the whole Middle East region in coming years.

In this light, he believed that Turkey should attempt a “cultural opening” both for the sake of the country itself and the whole region. Davutoğlu went on to say that this opening, which should be based on the country's own “cultural experience,” could be “one of Turkey's greatest contributions to global civilization” which would also protect it from a “geo-cultural rejection.”³⁶⁴ This notion, along with the FM's perception that the Middle East is a geo-culturally

³⁶² İbrahim Kalın, “Turkey and the Middle East: Ideology or Geo-Politics?,” *PrivateView* (2008).

³⁶³ Davutoğlu, “Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy [Speech],” 4, 9.

³⁶⁴ Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth*: 220-21.

integrated Islamic space, shows the importance Davutoğlu ascribes to the region as well as to culture – not the least, religion – as a means of approaching it – at least before becoming a policy-maker.³⁶⁵

Despite the occasional lack of communication or coordination at the elite level among Turkish officials,³⁶⁶ these perceptions about Turkey's historical geo-cultural role in the region are largely common and prevalent in public expressions of ideas by other AKP officials as well. As political descendants of the traditional Islamist National Outlook movement, and therefore informed by a political Islamic ideology, the AKP elites have – and express – amplified feelings of a “religious solidarity” that transcends national identity and boundaries.³⁶⁷ When it comes to the case of Syria, such notions were frequently expressed. For example, in 2009 PM Erdoğan, when talking about the booming Turkish-Syrian economic relations, referred to the Syrian Prime Minister as “my brother Otri,” adding that they will succeed in increasing the volume of bilateral trade, “God willing.”³⁶⁸

The close relationship between the two countries, as perceived by Turkish elites, was again expressed by Erdoğan in an earlier visit to Damascus where he remarked: “Is it possible to differentiate a Syrian and Turk among the people of enlightened faces in this hall? I want to call you not my friends but my

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 213.

³⁶⁶ Chairman of the Scientific Committee at International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) Dr. İhsan Bal. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

³⁶⁷ M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, “Introduction,” in *The Qur'an*, ed. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), xii-xiii; See also, Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*: 131. Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013.

³⁶⁸ Erdoğan quoted in, Tür, “The Political Economy of Turkish-Syrian Relations in the 2000s,” 165.

brothers.”³⁶⁹ Importantly, Davutoğlu also invoked the concept of brotherhood when – referring to the Arab uprisings – he wrote that Turkey considers “all people of the region” as “eternal brothers irrespective of their background.”³⁷⁰

As Nikos Moudouros argues, the idea of brotherhood is one of the basic principles of Islam while it is also encouraged by Prophet Mohammed. Moreover, the notion of brotherhood as a traditional religion-based institution responsible for economic activities as well, given that Islam “embodies all the principles related to politics, the economy, and administration,” it legitimises the contemporary conduct of business and entrepreneurship. In Turkey, these cultural elements, which have mingled with the neo-liberal and Capitalist development program of the AKP, inform Turkish political Islamic ideology and thus policy-making.³⁷¹

The existence of such beliefs among the Turkish elites is important as leadership has played a central role in Turkish-Syrian relations. According to Turkish officials interviewed by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in 2008, “Erdoğan and Assad enjoy mutual trust. That may be the single most important aspect of their relationship.”³⁷² If one accepts that the positive bilateral relations

³⁶⁹ Erdoğan quoted in, Özlem Tūr and Melia Benli Altunişik, "From Distant Neighbours to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations," *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 2 (2006): 233.

³⁷⁰ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring," *International Policy and Leadership Institute, Turkey Policy Brief Series*, 3rd Edition(2012): 5.

³⁷¹ Nikos Moudouros, "The 'harmonization' of Islam with the Neoliberal Transformation. The Case of Turkey," *Globalizations* 11(2014): 4, 5-11; see also, Yildiz Atasoy, *Islam's Marriage with Neoliberalism: State Transformation in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). 133-34. Also interesting is the fact that Prophet Mohammed was also a merchant, and how that influenced the relation between Islam and the importance of trade/economy. Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview to the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, August 2013.

³⁷² Footnote no.89 in, ICG, "Reshuffling the Cards? (I): Syria's Evolving Strategy," *Middle East Report* 92(2009): 13.

of the two countries were largely a result of good inter-personal relations at the leadership level, then the importance of the “cultural... sphere of national life [in] consolidating inter-state political relations,” becomes evident.³⁷³ But this does not regard Assad as such, given that he is the head of the secular-oriented Ba’ath party and an Alawite. Rather it refers to Assad as the president of a country which is largely Muslim.³⁷⁴ Therefore, in this instance cultural affinity stems from common religion, as elaborated in the AKP elite ideology intervening variable. In turn, this provides the ideal context for elite ideas and beliefs to work as “roadmaps” and influence foreign policy.

In this sense, AKP elite ideology played an instrumental role in the making of Turkey’s foreign – and particularly economic – policy towards Syria. The regional geopolitical realities of the 2000s were filtered by the particular set of its elite beliefs that led Turkey to develop – often anti-Western – regional alliances as a response to its external challenges and threats, instead of bandwagoning with its traditional and most powerful ally – the United States. Yet, the AKP’s foreign policy-making is not restricted to external material and domestic ideological considerations but it is also related to pressures by domestic interest groups and their own considerations, as analysed below. It is also worth noting that apart from the added value of the NcR theoretical

³⁷³ Philip Robins, “‘Victory of Friendship’?: Asad, Erdoğan and Football Diplomacy in Aleppo,” in *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem Tür (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 81, 93.

³⁷⁴ After the Syrian civil war broke out, AKP elites made an often distinction between the Syrian president and the Syrian people; they opposed the former and supported the latter. See for example, Kochava Rozenbaum, “Erdogan: ‘Syria’s Assad is a Terrorist, not a Politician’,” *Israel National News* (10/08/2013), http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/172624#.U6ctn_mSzy4.

framework and its focused and systematic analysis, considering power changes, threat perceptions, economic interests, as well as ideology and pressure groups, it has its own limitations. For example, other domestic – non-state – actors are excluded, while ideational factors could go beyond ideology.

2nd Intervening Variable: Domestic Interest Groups

The domestic interest groups under examination here include the business elites, as expressed through the two biggest business associations in Turkey (MÜSİAD and TÜSİAD), the political opposition (primarily, the CHP, BDP, MHP, and military elites), as well as public opinion. The different, yet sometimes overlapping, interests that these groups represent have an impact on TFP depending on the issue at hand, especially as the country becomes more democratic and settles in an era of mass politics, thus becoming more accountable to various political and social forces within the country.

Beginning with the role of business elites, it is worth noting that they have not always had a place in policy-making, due to the over-centralised nature of the state and its decision-making mechanisms. In the 1980s, Turgut Özal saw this as a problem and tried to change it. As a result, he initiated efforts to establish “a novel institutional framework, through which the state would maintain its central position but at the same time allow the business community

to play a role in Turkey's foreign economic policy."³⁷⁵ This is important in the context of domestic and ideological dynamics.

By the 1980s political Islam had become more prominent in policy-making, as showed earlier, and more emphasis was given to the economy, with a focus on exports and liberalisation. That is also how business elites, and private capital, became gradually more influential in foreign policy.³⁷⁶ Eventually, the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK), which was affiliated with the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB), was established and it was responsible for representing the interests of the business community in foreign economic policy. In general, the political and ideological orientation of political parties largely defined the relations between the government and business elites, while apart from a brief setback in the policy-making role of the business community in the 90s, the rise of the AKP gave new impetus to the relations between the state and business associations.³⁷⁷

Today, business associations, and particularly MÜSİAD and TÜSİAD, do play a role in foreign policy-making through public support or opposition to state policies, international business events, and participation in official visits of Turkish leaders abroad.³⁷⁸ For example, former Turkish President, Abdullah Gül, used to make diplomatic trips to countries of the region often,

³⁷⁵ Altay Atlı, "Businessmen as Diplomats: The Role of Business Associations in Turkey's Foreign Economic Policy," *Insight Turkey* 13, no. 1 (2011): 112-13.

³⁷⁶ Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013.

³⁷⁷ Atlı, "Businessmen as Diplomats," 115-16.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 117-18.

accompanied by dozens, sometimes up to two hundred, businessmen and officials.³⁷⁹ Altay Atlı notes that within the first years of Gül's presidency he paid 70 visits to other countries, along with a total of 2,670 businessmen, which resulted in business relations of up to 20 billion dollars of worth.³⁸⁰

This activism was directly linked with the AKP's broader vision for the Middle East. As such, Turkey's economic relations with Syria, and the Middle East more generally, had been influenced both by the AKP's perspective on economic development and the region as well as its need to support the country's recovering economy through the search for new markets.³⁸¹ In this context, Syria, due to its membership in the Greater Arab Free Trade Area was seen as the gateway to the markets of the Arab world.³⁸²

MÜSİAD's close affiliation with the AKP, as an independent expresser of the interests of the Anatolian business elites – the so called Islamic capital – had an important role in Turkey's particular economic and trade orientation towards the Middle East and Syria.³⁸³ As Hinnebusch and Tür note, "the AKP-linked business association, MÜSİAD, searching for new markets and supportive of an economic opening to the Arab world, acquired a growing

³⁷⁹ Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September 2013.

³⁸⁰ Atlı, "Businessmen as Diplomats," 116.

³⁸¹ Özlem Tür, "Economic Relations with the Middle East Under the AKP - Trade, Business Community and Reintegration with Neighboring Zones," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 4 (2011): 589-90.

³⁸² Tür, "The Political Economy of Turkish-Syrian Relations in the 2000s," 160-61. Also, Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 June 2013.

³⁸³ Ibid., 160. See also, expressions of support from MÜSİAD to the AKP government in, "MÜSİAD: Government avoiding populism," *Today's Zaman* (07/07/2007), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-116068-musiad-government-avoiding-populism.html>; and, Abdülhamit Yıldız, "Stand-by no longer option for Turkey, MÜSİAD says," *Today's Zaman* (09/06/2009), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-177544-stand-by-no-longer-option-for-turkey-musiad-says.html>.

voice which favoured an economic opening to Syria.”³⁸⁴ This is not to say that TÜSİAD was irrelevant in this process. Although MÜSİAD is deemed as politically oriented and closer to the government,³⁸⁵ TÜSİAD also claims to be in communication and have good relations with the government³⁸⁶ – despite its occasional criticism of it.³⁸⁷

A TÜSİAD research associate said that the association also played a role, as it has been supportive of the AKP’s promotion of business relations with its neighbours, and that it continues to do so as a non-partisan actor with interests in economic development. It was added, though, that TÜSİAD would not be supportive of developing regional economic relations at the expense of Turkey’s relations with the EU and the West.³⁸⁸ That is both because of pragmatic reasons as well as because of TÜSİAD’s traditional pro-Westernism which informs its commitment to good relations with the EU and the US.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁴ Hinnebusch and Tür, "Conclusion," 220.

³⁸⁵ MÜSİAD has been an open supporter both of the AKP and its Islamist predecessor, Refah Party. For an extensive account of MÜSİAD and its political affiliations through interviews see, Filiz Başkan, "The Rising Islamic Business Elite and Democratization in Turkey," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 12, no. 4 (2010): 405-09. Başkan argues that an "organic relationship between MÜSİAD and the AKP" is evident in the fact that "some members of MÜSİAD were elected as deputies of the AKP, both in the 2002 and the 2007 general elections." Ibid., 408; also, academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013.

³⁸⁶ International Coordinator and EU Representative, TÜSİAD, Brussels Branch, Dr. Bahadır Kaleağasi. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013.

³⁸⁷ See examples of TÜSİAD’s criticism to the government in, "TUSIAD lambastes the government," *Hürriyet Daily News*(13/12/2003), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=tusiad-lambastes-the-government-2003-12-13>; and, "Defiant PM tells TÜSİAD to mind its own business," *Today's Zaman* (17/09/2012), <http://www.todayzaman.com/news-292592-defiant-pm-tells-tusiad-to-mind-its-own-business.html>.

³⁸⁸ TÜSİAD Brussels branch research associate. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013. Identity of the interviewee in possession of the author.

³⁸⁹ Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013.

The interests of the business community were reflected on a number of occasions. During the third meeting of the Turkey-Syria Partnership Council, prior to signing the visa free agreement, the Turkish Minister of Economy, Zafer Çağlayan, himself a businessman, said that in the context of boosting bilateral economic relations, "investments of Turkish businessmen in Syria would be encouraged."³⁹⁰ In continuation of Çağlayan remarks, Davutoğlu was accompanied by a delegation of businessmen when he travelled to Syria and signed the visa free agreement with his Syrian counterpart.³⁹¹

With the Free Trade Agreement already signed, the visa free agreement deepened even further the relations between the business communities of the two countries. An example of that was a visit that Syrian businessmen paid to Turkish President Gül. During the visit, Gül underlined once again the common bilateral investment and trade interests while noting that "Turkish firms could carry out infrastructure work in Syria."³⁹² Lastly, the great movement in the relations of the business communities of the two countries was also depicted in remarks of an Aleppo Chamber of Commerce officer, who said that, Syria was accepting numerous delegations of Turkish businessmen, at the same time that the tourist industries and bilateral investment was booming after the abolishment of visa requirements.³⁹³

³⁹⁰ "Road Map Formed to Boost Relations Between Turkey and Syria, Çağlayan," *Anadolu Agency*(24/07/2009), <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/s/34222--road-map-formed-to-boost-relations-between-turkey-and-syria--caglayan>.

³⁹¹ "FM Davutoglu Travels to Syria," *Anadolu Agency*(13/10/2009), <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/s/33564--fm-davutoglu-travels-to-syria>.

³⁹² "Syrian businessmen pay a visit to Gül," *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*(17/02/2010), <http://www.tccb.gov.tr/news/397/48751/syrian-businebmen-pay-a-visit-to-gul.html>.

³⁹³ Stephen Starr, "Syria and Turkey: Strengthening Ties," *Forward Magazine* 42(August, 2010): 28.

The general sentiment regarding Turkey's growing regional economic relations within the country was positive. The business elites and particularly MÜSİAD played their – mostly indirect and informal – role in these policies thus expressing their own interests which were favoured to a great extent by Turkey's external security considerations. As the case of Israel later shows as well, this could mean that mismatch between business interests and security considerations could lead AKP policy-makers to ignore the former. This does not mean, however, that absence of political support to business activities or interests hinders them necessarily.

In terms of other domestic interest groups, such as political parties of the opposition (e.g. the CHP, MHP, BDP), the booming economic relations were not perceived negatively as no party was opposed to economic integration. After all, the political programmes of all these parties advocate for “warm relations with neighboring countries” and international cooperation (BDP),³⁹⁴ regional peace and “regional cooperation with international purposes” (MHP),³⁹⁵ as well as “good neighbourly relations” and Kemal Atatürk's motto “peace at home, peace in the world” (CHP).³⁹⁶ From that perspective domestic opposition did not play a role in driving Turkish economic policy toward Syria but it neither

³⁹⁴ "Peace and Democracy Party Program," *Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)*, <http://www.bdp.org.tr/devam/17-bdp-program.aspx>.

³⁹⁵ MHP, *The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) Program: 9th Ordinary Congress, "Toward the Future"* (Ankara 2009). 65.

³⁹⁶ Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, "Interview with Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (2010): 27.

opposed it. It could be argued that these parties silently endorsed the AKP's foreign economic policies.³⁹⁷

To be sure, these parties did not remain silent when it came to other governmental policies, such as the growing anti-EU and anti-Western stance, the treatment (imprisonment) of military personnel, democratic reforms, the handling of the Kurdish issue and the initiatives for its resolution.³⁹⁸ Moreover, the opposition, and particularly the main opposition party (CHP), have been mostly worried about two things: Turkey's overall foreign policy orientation, and their own impact on decision-making.

Apart from the notion that the AKP elite has gradually – and concurrently with the consolidation of its power – cut off communications with other domestic political and social powers (e.g. political allies, political opposition, and civil society actors),³⁹⁹ there is a strong disagreement with what is

³⁹⁷ Research on Turkish electronic English-speaking newspapers, such as Today's Zaman, Hürriyet Daily News, Anadolu Agency, Turkish Weekly, as well as on the websites of the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Economy, and Turkish Presidency, showed no specific records of opposition or support to AKP's economic policies towards Syria by these parties, especially regarding the free trade and visa free agreements. Moreover, when asked about their stance towards these AKP policies, CHP Deputy Chairman, Osman Faruk Loğoğlu, and Kivanç Özcan, Parliamentary Advisor to the CHP said that they supported them, in the context of the CHP's support of good neighbourly relations. CHP Deputy Chairman Osman Faruk Loğoğlu Interview with the author, Ankara, 30 September 2013. CHP Parliamentary Assistant Kivanç Özcan. Interview with the author, Ankara, 24 September, 2013.

³⁹⁸ See for example, "Turkish opposition leaders criticize detentions of commanders," *Hürriyet Daily News* (23/01/2010), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-opposition-leaders-criticize-detentions-of-commanders.aspx?pageID=438&n=opposition-slam-detentions-of-commanders-2010-02-23>; "Newsmaker Interview: Kemal Kilicdaroglu, Leader of Main Turkish Opposition Party," *Voice of America*, <http://www.voanews.com/content/newsmaker-interview-kemal-kilicdaroglu-leader-of-main-turkish-opposition-party-123467144/170699.html>.

³⁹⁹ USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; CHP Deputy Chairman Osman Faruk Loğoğlu Interview with the author, Ankara, 30 September 2013. CHP Parliamentary Assistant Kivanç Özcan. Interview with the author, Ankara, 24 September 2013; and, "Resentment Against Erdogan

perceived to be anti-Western behaviour and Middle Easternized foreign policy at the expense of relations with traditional Western allies.⁴⁰⁰ The same sentiment is shared by the Kemalist military elites as well. Given their ideological differences with the AKP, they supported a more cautious and inward foreign policy. Such an approach was not opposed to better economic relations with the Middle East and the Arab world insofar as it did not affect negatively the country's ties with the US, the EU and Israel. In that sense, the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment did not constitute an obstacle in the AKP's economic foreign policy towards Syria.

It is worth mentioning that the military's stance in relation to the EU was at least to some extent populist given that while it supported Turkey's EU membership, it had feared political reforms precisely because they would weaken its role in politics. After Turkey was granted the candidacy for EU accession the military took more sincere steps towards the EU.⁴⁰¹ Yet, the AKP's rise to power quickly brought back insecurity to the Kemalist Generals about

Explodes," *The Economist*(2/06/2013),

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/charlemagne/2013/06/turkish-politics>; Abdullah Ayasun, "How Erdoğan Torpedoes His Rule," *Today's Zaman* (12/01/2014),

http://www.todayszaman.com/blog/abdullah-ayasun_336444_how-erdogan-torpedoes-his-rule.html;

Henri J. Barkey, "Erdoğan Jumps out of the Frying Pan, into the Fire," *The American*

Interest(01/04/2014), <http://www.the-american-interest.com/articles/2014/04/01/erdogan-jumps-out-of-the-frying-pan-into-the-fire/>. From that perspective, as noted elsewhere as well, the EU-backed democratization of the AKP's first term was succeeded by increasing authoritarianism.

⁴⁰⁰ CHP Parliamentary Assistant Kivanç Özcan. Interview with the author, Ankara, 24 September 2013; USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013. A remark in this vein was also made by Dr. Cenk Aygül, at the 8th Pan-European, European International Studies Association (EISA), conference, who said that the AKP has "relegated all other foreign policy actors."

⁴⁰¹ Ersel Aydın and Dov Waxman, "A Dream Become Nightmare? Turkey's Entry into the European Union," *Current History* 100, no. 649 (2001): 382-83; Soner Cagaptay, "European Union Reforms Diminish the Role of the Turkish Military: Ankara Knocking ON Brussels' Door," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy* (2003).

the possibility of losing their political role, and that was one of the reasons they attempted to stage an indirect coup in 2007. As Michael Gunter puts it, at the peak of this civil-military struggle in 2007, "the military felt strong enough to reassert itself before it had been politically reduced beyond reply."⁴⁰² It is a fact, after all, that while Kemalists believed that they were the best option for Turkey's EU accession they were paradoxically reminding of the military's role as the safeguard of the state and its institutions. According to one military officer, despite Atatürk's belief that the military should not mingle into politics, this does not mean that governments could do whatever they want; "some important and sensitive issues, such as secularism and republicanism, are still monitored by the military, as is stipulated in the constitution."⁴⁰³

Eventually, the AKP has managed to significantly weaken the political role of the military elites, especially after 2007, and therefore its influence in foreign policy-making.⁴⁰⁴ EU-backed state restructurings implemented by the AKP have been undermining the military's institutional role through constitutional and judicial reforms. As mentioned, the tension between the military and the AKP's civic elites peaked in 2007 when the AKP launched a judicial campaign against military elites and their affiliates from academic, business, and other circles, accusing them of a coup plot against the

⁴⁰² Michael M. Gunter, "The AKP Catalyst: Progressive Islamists and Ambitious Kurds," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 9, no. 2 (2008): 60.

⁴⁰³ Hakan Karakus, "Turkey and the European Union (EU): Kemalism's Effects on the Road to the EU" (Naval Postgraduate School, 2005), 32; See also, David Capezza, "Turkey's Military is a Catalyst for Reform," *Middle East Quarterly* XVI, no. 3 (2009).

⁴⁰⁴ Chairman of the Scientific Committee at International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) Dr. İhsan Bal. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013

government. This led to a series of arrests of high-ranking military officials and, ultimately, to the predominance and consolidation of the AKP's power over the state and its decision-making mechanisms.⁴⁰⁵

From that perspective, as far as Turkey's Syria economic policy is concerned, it occurs that the military had no role both because its own approach to foreign policy did not exclude better economic relations with neighbours and because by the time that Turkish-Syrian relations boomed in 2009 its role had been significantly severed. Further, this points to (ideological) convergence between the AKP and the Kemalist establishment but only to the extent that traditional tenets of the latter's ideology or its own existence were not threatened, as seen in the case of the EU and the 2007 coup attempt. Lastly, the fact that by 2009 there was no serious Kemalist opposition to challenge the deepening Turkish-Syrian relations, suggest that TFP had gone through democratisation and became independent from the upper hand of Kemalist-military elites.

An additional result of the same reforms that diminished the military's political influence was the further democratization of the country. This entailed that the political elites would need to abide by the will of the public opinion to a greater extent than before. In this context, the pulse of public opinion as regards different subjects of domestic and foreign policy cannot be neglected. In terms of Turkey's Syria economic policies public opinion, as a pressure group, had a

⁴⁰⁵ Soner Cagaptay and Ata Akiner, "Turkey's military bows to the politicians," *Islamic Affairs Analyst* (September, 2011): 2-3; Ziya Meral and Jonathan Paris, "Decoding Turkish Foreign Policy Hyperactivity," *The Washington Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (2010): 77.

detractive effect; that is, it affected TFP not necessarily by endorsing Turkish-Syrian relations, but by developing increasingly negative perceptions of the West.

Indeed, there is a general consensus that the US Middle East policy after 9/11 and especially the Iraq war gave rise to anti-Americanism in the region and Turkey in particular.⁴⁰⁶ This has been supported by various opinion surveys that were conducted throughout the decade such as those by the Pew Global Attitudes Project. Specifically, a Pew 2006 survey showed that the favourable opinions of the US in Turkey dropped from 52% in 1999/2000 to 12% in 2006 (it had an increase of only 2% by 2010).⁴⁰⁷ This was also the period during which the positive Turkish-Syrian relations deepened and the Free Trade Agreement was signed. Similar results were displayed earlier, in 2003, in an opinion survey with IR students which revealed the perception of an aggressive and interventionist US.⁴⁰⁸

Moreover, a comparative analysis of different opinion survey's regarding the AKP's foreign policy, showed an overall tendency in Turkish society – regardless of political orientation – towards suspicion of all international actors

⁴⁰⁶ Tür and Altunışık, "From Distant Neighbours to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations," 233; Emre Erdoğan, "The Missing Element: Turkish Public Opinion Towards the US," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (2005); Joshua W. Walker, "Reexamining the U.S.-Turkish Alliance," *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2007): 96-109; Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Friends No More? The Rise of Anti-American Nationalism in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 1 (2010): 51-66.

⁴⁰⁷ Pew, *America's Image Slips, but Allies Share U.S. Concerns over Iran, Hamas* (Washington: Pew Research Center, 2006). 2; Andrew Kohut, "Reviving America's Global Image," *Pew Research Centre*(2010), <http://www.pewglobal.org/2010/03/05/reviving-americas-global-image/>.

⁴⁰⁸ Ann Kelleher, Ozlen Kunccek, and Sevilay Kharaman, "Turkish Student Attitudes about the United States," *International Studies Perspectives* 4, no. 3 (2003): 250-64.

and “support for independent Turkish policies.”⁴⁰⁹ Within this framework, external developments also affected the perceptions of public opinion and exacerbated nationalistic feelings and threat perceptions which in turn favoured a foreign policy more independent from the US and, therefore, made “developing relations with Syria” seem “as logical.”⁴¹⁰ What has to be added, is that “Turkey’s anti-Americanism often overlaps with anti-EU feelings” since the EU is linked with many domestic polarising issues such as the Kurdish issue. In Ömer Taşpınar’s words, “it is Brussels, not Washington, that is demanding Ankara accept the Kurds as a national minority with distinct cultural and linguistic rights.”⁴¹¹

All in all, although anti-Americanism was not new to Turkey, it reached new high levels in the 2000s. Not only did this not challenge the AKP’s foreign policy, but instead it favoured its shift towards the Middle East and its close cooperation with Syria – and Iran – as a response to external power changes, threat perceptions, as well as domestic ideological preferences and economic pressures. This observation goes beyond polls about public opinion’s support for or opposition to governmental policies; it also goes beyond studies that draw parallels between anti-American or anti-Western sentiments and TFP decisions. Its additional value is that it explains how public opinion contributed to Turkey’s shift to the Middle East; even more important will be the results

⁴⁰⁹ Ryan Kennedy and Matt Dickenson, “Turkish Foreign Policy and Public Opinion in the AKP Era,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 9, no. 2 (2012): 185.

⁴¹⁰ Tūr and Altunışık, “From Distant Neighbours to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations,” 233.

⁴¹¹ Ömer Taşpınar, “Anti-Americanism and Turkey’s identity problems,” *Today’s Zaman* (02/07/2007), http://www.sundayszaman.com/newsDetail_openPrintPage.action?newsId=115497.

about the relationship between AKP policies and public opinion when Turkey's Syria policies are compared with Turkey's Israel policies. Thus, this approach allows the thesis to explain the circumstances under which the AKP takes into account public opinion as well as the circumstances under which public opinion supports or opposes its policies.

Intervening Variables and the AKP's Economic Policies towards Syria

As regards Turkey's economic policies towards Syria under the AKP, between 2002 and 2011, there seems to be a convergence among the variables, both the independent and the intervening ones. That is, the geopolitical realities, which called for closer cooperation with regional actors, in order for Turkey to be able to deal with regional security threats, coincided with a host of other domestic factors: the rise of an elite ideology that favoured economic interdependence in geo-cultural terms, a public opinion which was receptive to this approach, growing domestic economic needs that the AKP saw through the lens of its close affiliation to "Islamic capital," and a political opposition that had no reason to oppose economic development and interdependence, given that at least during the first years of the AKP's governance it did not seem to threaten the country's Western orientation.

The causal role of each of these factors in TFP is identified in the comparative analysis chapter. What should be noted is that convergence in the variables is not the rule in TFP, especially when the systemic context (time period) is different. Moreover, in order to be able to identify the most important

drivers, at different and very specific points in time, a much narrower approach is needed, that would examine in detail each foreign policy event separately. That would also entail a shorter timeframe and more variables. This does not sit in contrast to the pursuit for specificity of this thesis as there are different degrees of specificities in NcR literature. While this study seeks some degree of specificity by examining relatively short time periods, it is not the same as a study that would, for example, look in detail at what Turkey did “last Tuesday.” Such great degree of specificity is not one of the strengths of this thesis’ approach.

5.2. Domestic Drivers and the Role of Iran in Turkey’s Syria Security Policy

As a part of TFP towards Syria, the analysis now turns to the role of Iran. The reason the role of Iran in Turkey’s Syria policy and broader regional security policy is examined, is threefold: Iran is a strategic and political ally of Syria; Turkey’s rapprochement with Syria was accompanied by deeper relations with Iran thus giving rise to a trilateral (quasi) alliance;⁴¹² and Iran constitutes a major regional and international security threat for Israel.

This background will allow for the better identification of the connection between domestic variables and external security issues and policies, as well as provide a point of comparison and contrast between Turkey’s Syria and Israel security policies. The latter is important as the role of the intervening variables

⁴¹² Özden Zeynep Oktav, “The Syrian Uprising and the Iran-Turkey-Syria Quasi Alliance: A View from Turkey,” in *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem Tür (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 193-203.

will become clearer given the different role that Syria and Israel have in Turkey's regional policy. Lastly, it is worth noting that Turkish-Iranian relations are very often analysed as part of Turkish Syria policy or vice versa.⁴¹³ In this context, the question to be answered in this section, through the analysis of the intervening variables, is: Has Turkey's relations with Iran played a role in bringing Turkey and Syria closer together?

1st Intervening Variable: the AKP Elite Ideology

Ideology has played an important role in the history of Turkish-Iranian relations, though secondary to systemic changes. Up to 1979 and the theocratic revolution in Iran, both the Kemalist government in Turkey and the Shah regime in Iran were secular and maintained relatively good relations.⁴¹⁴ The ideological change in Iran and the predominance of Shiite political Islam, as a result of the 1979 revolution, had a negative – albeit limited – impact on the relations of the two countries as well as on Iran's relations with the West more generally. Although no significant problems occurred between Turkey and Iran, the end of the Cold War and Turkey's nationalist foreign policy which sought to approach the Turkic peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia led Iran to see

⁴¹³ See for example, Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy," 8-10; Bülent Aras and Rabia Karakaya Polat, "From Conflict to Cooperation: Desecuritization of Turkey's Relations with Syria and Iran," *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 5 (2008): 495-515; Oktav, "The Syrian Uprising and the Iran-Turkey-Syria Quasi Alliance: A View from Turkey," 193-203; Altunışık, "Explaining the Transformation of Turkish-Syrian Relations," 177-91; Altunışık and Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP," 581-84.

⁴¹⁴ For a comparative narrative of secular democracy in Turkey and Iran see, Kinzer, *Reset: Iran, Turkey and America's Future*: e.g. 61.

Turkey as a threat. Thereafter, Iran joined Syria in supporting the PKK as a proxy against Turkey.⁴¹⁵

From a Turkish point of view, Iran's support to the PKK as well as its efforts to export its Islamic revolution to the region, were seen as threats by the Kemalist establishment. Further, the theocratic regime in Iran was seen as an obstacle to effective communication between Tehran and secular Turkey. Importantly, the banned Islamist predecessor of the AKP, the RP, was thought to be collaborating with Tehran for the establishment of a joint Islamic state consisting of Turkey and Iran.⁴¹⁶ The fears of the Kemalist Generals were not entirely groundless given Iran's "embrace of Turkish Islamists" as Turkish political Islam started to challenge Turkey's secular establishment in the 1990s.⁴¹⁷ This closer affinity between Turkey's Islamists and Iran's theocratic regime later played a part in the betterment of bilateral relations.

Within the above framework, in 2001 Aras argued that "Turkey's policy towards Iran has become hostage to the worldview of Turkey's governing elite [i.e. the Kemalists], one that has demonstrated itself to be increasingly unable to successfully cope with political change on domestic, regional, and international levels."⁴¹⁸ From that perspective, the rise of the AKP to power, as a bearer of a different – pro-Islamic – elite ideology, had to automatically have a positive effect on Turkish-Iranian relations. Such was indeed the case. As Elliot Hentov

⁴¹⁵ Elliot Hentov, "Turkey and Iran," in *Turkey's Global Strategy*, ed. Nicholas Kitchen (London: LSE IDEAS, 2011), 29.

⁴¹⁶ Bülent Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy towards Iran: Ideology and Foreign Policy in Flux," *Journal of Third World Studies* XVIII, no. 1 (2001): 107-10.

⁴¹⁷ Hentov, "Turkey and Iran," 29.

⁴¹⁸ Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy towards Iran: Ideology and Foreign Policy in Flux," 105.

argues, although the rapprochement between Turkey and Iran began in 2000, the rise of the AKP and its elite “diminished the military-bureaucratic influence and with it, the ideological differences between Turkey and Iran.”⁴¹⁹

The new era in the relationship of the two countries was ushered by the milestone visit of then Turkish President, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, to Tehran in 2002 despite the fact that the AKP had not yet been elected and that Sezer was part of the Kemalist establishment.⁴²⁰ That decision could be mainly explained by security concerns which dominated the agenda – a characteristic of Kemalist foreign policy – and economic needs or pressures that are examined as part of the next intervening variable. Consequently, the relations of the two countries boomed with the exports of Turkish goods to Iran having a 2652% increase in 2012 in relation to 2001, and their overall bilateral trade volume rising from 1.051.514 USD in 2000 to 10.687.739 USD in 2010.⁴²¹ Not only that, but Turkey’s close relations with Iran became a concern in Western circles that feared Turkey’s (ideological) turning away from the West, especially given the parallel improvement in its relations with Syria – importantly, both Iran and Syria are part of the so called “axis of evil.”⁴²²

⁴¹⁹ Hentov, "Turkey and Iran," 29.

⁴²⁰ "Sezer to Visit Iran," *Hürriyet Daily News*(17/06/2002), https://www.google.com/search?q=hurriyetdail&oq=hurriyetdail&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i60l3j0l2.3411j0j7&sourceid=chrome&espv=210&es_sm=122&ie=UTF-8; Ercan Ersoy, "Turk President says Secular System in Danger," *Reuters* (13/04/2007), <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2007/04/13/uk-turkey-president-idUKL1325086720070413>.

⁴²¹ "Iran," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy*(July, 2013), <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=956FA19A-08CD-90A7-EC6BAA49112BA3F3>; "Turkey-Iran Economic and Trade Relations," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-iran.en.mfa.

⁴²² Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey’s Foreign Policy," 9.

The AKP elite ideology that accompanied this significant rapprochement played an instrumental role. Once again, this can be suggested based on public expressions of opinion by AKP officials and leaders. In 2008, Murat Mercan, a founding member of the AKP, wrote that "Turkish and Iranian peoples enjoy deep historical and cultural rights." Moreover, he said that "Iranians are not only our neighbors but also our friends and brothers. Not a single Turkish citizen can accept that his/her brothers/sisters suffer from unfair treatment by the international community."⁴²³ Thus, the same notion of brotherhood and solidarity used in the case of Syria becomes evident in the AKP elite discourse regarding Iran as well.

For his part, former FM Davutoğlu, acknowledges the historical tensions caused in Turkish-Iranian relations due to the different Islamic religious doctrines (i.e. Sunni and Shiite) but highlights the need for a pragmatic policy that would lead Turkey and Iran to a re-evaluation of their relations towards the establishment of "a harmonious relationship between the geographic and historic necessities and their particularities that stem from the conjunctures of the international system."⁴²⁴ The need of initiating a dialogue with Iran was also expressed by President Gül who disagreed with the strategy of sanctions and coercion of the West and Israel towards Iran and its nuclear program.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Murat Mercan, "Turkish Foreign Policy and Iran," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (2009): 17, 19.

⁴²⁴ Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth*: 642, 45.

⁴²⁵ Stephen Kinzer, "US must share power in new world order, says Turkey's controversial president [Interview with Gül]," *The Guardian* (16/08/2008), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/16/turkey.usforeignpolicy>.

From this perspective it seems that political Islam as well as pragmatic considerations at the AKP elite level influenced TFP towards Iran. As far as the role of this set of elite ideas in Turkey's Syria policy is concerned, one needs to initially acknowledge that there are conflicting views as to the correlation between the betterment of relations with Iran and Syria;⁴²⁶ at the same time, a number of other factors need to be taken into account to reach a clearer conclusion.

First, it is important that Islamism became much more prominent in Turkish foreign policy-making after 2007 and the weakening of the Kemalist ideology, as demonstrated above.⁴²⁷ As such, the development of better relations between Turkey and Iran at the beginning had mainly to do with pragmatic/material – security and economic – considerations. Yet, the rise of the AKP to power and its gradual dominance of the state and decision-making mechanisms, gave a different and deeper character to bilateral relations. This change became obvious in 2010 when Turkey, together with Lebanon's abstention and Brazil's negative vote, voted against the imposition of further sanctions against Iran and its nuclear program.⁴²⁸

The latter ideological and by extension political development falls well into and reaffirms the observation of Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Süleyman

⁴²⁶ Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Reşat Arim. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013. Ambassador Aksoy argued that Turkey's rapprochement with Iran did not affect its relations with Syria, while Ambassador Arim expressed an opposite opinion.

⁴²⁷ Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013.

⁴²⁸ Neil MacFarquhar, "U.N. Approves New Sanctions to Deter Iran," *The New York Times* (09/06/2010), http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/10/world/middleeast/10sanctions.html?_r=0; "Security Council Imposes Additional Sanctions on Iran," *United Nations Security Council S/RES/1929* (2010)(June, 2010).

Elik who argued that, "Turkey's confident Islamic identity and its difficult EU membership application have dramatically increased scepticism surrounding the relationship between Turkey and Europe and drawn Turkey to look more seriously at engaging with the Middle East."⁴²⁹ Being favoured by systemic reasons and its consolidated power and ideology domestically, the AKP had become more assertive. In this context, Turkey's Syria policy, apart from systemic, economic, security and ideological reasons, was also favoured and sustained by the betterment of relations between Ankara and Tehran.

Overall, the AKP elite ideology had a twofold role: on the one hand it provided the necessary ground for the improvement of relations both with Syria and Iran, while on the other hand it was instrumental in filtering systemic, external economic, security, and political developments – such as the deteriorating relations with the EU and the high risk regional security situation – in such a way that led to closer and deeper relations between the two countries.

Despite the pragmatism that FM Davutoğlu often advocates with regard to this matter and TFP more generally, he also remarked that "Turkey and Iran share a very long common history" just as he said that Turkey and Syria have a "common destiny, history, and future."⁴³⁰ From that perspective, the close

⁴²⁹ Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Süleyman Elik, "Turkey's Growing Relations with Iran and Arab Middle East," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 4 (2011): 655.

⁴³⁰ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "SPIEGEL Interview with Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu: 'Turkey Doesn't Want Chaos in the Middle East' - Part 1," *Spiegel Online International*(22/06/2009), <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/spiegel-interview-with-turkish-foreign-minister-davutoglu-turkey-doesn-t-want-chaos-in-the-middle-east-a-631848.html>; "Davutoglu: Common Destiny, History & Future is Slogan of Turkey," *Anadolu Agency*(13/10/2009), <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/news/33559--davutoglu--common-destiny--history---future-is-slogan-of-turkey---syria>.

Turkey-Syria cooperation which stemmed both from pragmatic needs and the AKP ideology, was further cemented as Turkey came closer to Iran; the AKP elite ideology played an increasingly important part as it became stronger within Turkey. Eventually, by the end of the 2000s, Turkey, Iran and Syria would be called a trilateral – if “quasi” – alliance between two non- and often anti-Western countries, and a Turkey that rejected the Western “expression ‘axis of evil’.”⁴³¹

2nd Intervening Variable: Domestic Interest Groups

Apart from shifts in elite ideology, the period of rapprochement that Turkey and Iran entered especially after 2002, was to a great extent a product of changing threat perceptions (as seen in the independent variables) and domestic interests. As elaborated earlier in the sections on the AKP elite ideology and threat perceptions, external structural developments are seen as primary in altering threat perceptions. Indeed, different sets of ideas or beliefs contain certain predispositions. However, it is maintained that threat perceptions emerge when systemic changes trigger these predispositions.

This section is primarily concerned with the role of domestic interest groups in the Turkey-Iran-Syria triangle. The question, then, that needs to be answered is, “which domestic group interests played a role in Turkey’s

⁴³¹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "SPIEGEL Interview with Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoglu: 'Turkey Doesn't Want Chaos in the Middle East' - Part 2: 'We Have Consistently Rejected the Expression "Axis of Evil",'" *Spiegel Online International*(22/06/2009), <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/spiegel-interview-with-turkish-foreign-minister-davutoglu-turkey-doesn-t-want-chaos-in-the-middle-east-a-631848-2.html>.

relations with Iran and Syria, and how do they relate to Turkey's security policies towards Syria?"

After 2002, and a rapprochement period which began in 2000, a number of bilateral agreements and diplomatic successes between Turkey and Iran followed. By 2011 Turkey and Iran had signed economic, energy, construction, transportation and telecommunications agreements and projects of cooperation.⁴³² In this growing relationship, the role of business groups was instrumental. As Davutoğlu wrote, in the AKP era business associations – and civil society – such as the Confederation of Businessman and Industrialists of Türkiye (TUSKON), TÜSİAD, and MÜSİAD, have an important place in TFP.⁴³³ Habibi affirms that the role of the business community signified that the “main driving force of Turkish-Iranian relations” has been “trade and investment,”⁴³⁴ while Gökhan Bacık referred to businessmen as having a more pragmatic approach to foreign (economic) policy as they are “desperately looking for new markets” in the region.⁴³⁵

TÜSİAD itself noted that it backed and still backs all economic openings of Turkey to the region,⁴³⁶ while MÜSİAD made clear on multiple occasions that it

⁴³² Nader Habibi, "Turkey and Iran: Growing Economic Relations Despite Western Sanctions," *Crown Center for Middle East Studies* Middle East Brief, no. 62 (May, 2012): 4.

⁴³³ Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision," 83-84. The theoretical framework does not account for TUSKON since MÜSİAD is seen as an adequate indicator of the interests and view of pro-government Islamic business elites.

⁴³⁴ Habibi, "Turkey and Iran: Growing Economic Relations Despite Western Sanctions," 1.

⁴³⁵ Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013. Dr. Bacık used anecdotes of relations between Turkish and Iranian businessmen to explain how the business community is not concerned with politics insofar as their own businesses and economic relations are not affected.

⁴³⁶ International Coordinator and EU Representative, TÜSİAD, Brussels Branch, Dr. Bahadır Kaleağası. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013.

considers economic relations, and particularly trade, with Iran to be a priority. Not only that, but also in 2011 the then MÜSİAD chairman, Ömer Vardan Jihad, said that the already multiplied volume of trade between the two countries was not sufficient and should increase even more.⁴³⁷ In another meeting Jihad had with Iran's consul general, Mahmoud Heydari, the latter expressed its readiness to boost relations with the Turkish business community and particularly with MÜSİAD.⁴³⁸ These relations between MÜSİAD businessmen and Iran could be better understood within the context of statements from the next chairman of the association, Nail Olpak, who emphasised the need for increased trade volume between Turkey and Islamic states.⁴³⁹

The attitude of the political opposition towards the Turkish-Iranian relationship was similar to the case of Turkish-Syrian relations. Specifically, the CHP's deputy chairman, Osman Faruk Loğoğlu, said that his "party always supports good relations" with its neighbours and added that "Turkey's relations with Iran are pivotal for the security and stability of the region" while

⁴³⁷ "MÜSİAD'dan İran'a 30 milyar dolarlık çağrı," *Sabah*(27/06/2011), <http://www.sabah.com.tr/Ekonomi/2011/06/27/musiaddan-irana-30-milyar-dolarlik-cagri>; "Boosting trade with Iran is a priority for Turkey's MUSIAD," *Tehran Times*(12/05/2012), <http://www.tehrantimes.com/economy-and-business/97789-boosting-trade-with-iran-is-a-priority-for-turkeys-musiad>.

⁴³⁸ "Head of MÜSİAD: Iran, Turkey to Boost Commercial Ties," *Moj News Agency*(10/01/2011), http://mojnews.com/en/Miscellaneous/ViewContents.aspx?Contract=cms_Content_I_News&r=846311.

⁴³⁹ Importantly enough, this statement was made at the MÜSİAD International Business Forum which was also addressed by Prime Minister Erdoğan. See, "'Trade Cannot be Confined By Borders'," *Sabah*(13/10/2012), <http://english.sabah.com.tr/Economy/2012/10/13/trade-cannot-be-confined-by-borders>. It is also worth noting that, Osman Faruk Loğoğlu, said that "pro-AKP business associations, such as MÜSİAD, are playing an important role in the AKP's foreign policy." CHP Deputy Chairman Osman Faruk Loğoğlu Interview with the author, Ankara, 30 September 2013.

he maintained that Iran is important for Turkey's relations with Syria as well.⁴⁴⁰ Moreover, as the quiet consensus of the opposition has shown both in the case of Syria and Iran, insofar as the development of regional relations does not hinder Turkey's national security or Western orientation, it is welcome. For its part, according to Bacık, Iran welcomes good relations between Turkey and Syria but does not want Turkey to dominate Syria.⁴⁴¹ This dynamic becomes more salient after the break out of the "Arab Spring" and the Syrian civil war.

Indeed, one could be puzzled, not only by the opposition's support to Turkey's relations with ideologically-different Iran, but also by the role that the Kemalist military establishment played in their improvement. Had the unit level, ideological and domestic interest issues, not been examined it would not have been possible to decode such paradoxes. It is important for this discussion to add that two days after then president Sezer's visit to Iran, "The heads of the Turkish and Syrian armies" also signed "military cooperation agreements" (June 19th, 2002).⁴⁴² This happened before the election of the AKP to power (November, 2002) but it shows the previous government's primary reasons for approaching Iran.

In this light, it is obvious that the improvement in Turkey's relations with these two countries stemmed primarily from security concerns – i.e. the Kurdish issue – and economic and energy needs; pressures from domestic

⁴⁴⁰ CHP Deputy Chairman Osman Faruk Loğoğlu Interview with the author, Ankara, 30 September 2013.

⁴⁴¹ Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013.

⁴⁴² "2002 in perspective," *Hürriyet Daily News*(05/01/2013), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/2002-in-perspective.aspx?pageID=438&n=2002-in-perspective-2003-01-05>.

business elites complemented the security policy imperatives.⁴⁴³ That also explains why the military and political opposition lent their support to the AKP. The understanding that led the Kemalists closer to Iran was very much in line with traditional tenets of Kemalist foreign policy orientation: prioritization of national security, suspicion of Western powers and maintenance of *status quo* – i.e. Turkey's territorial integrity. It is within this framework that the MHP's Member of Parliament, Oktay Vural, expressed concerns over (Kurdish) terrorism and separatism, which was exacerbated by the Iraq war (2003).⁴⁴⁴ The management of this threat would be welcome, from the CHP, the MHP as well as the Kemalist Generals. The only party opposed to Turkish government's (cross-border) military operations against the PKK, was the pro-Kurdish BDP which voted against them in parliament as well.⁴⁴⁵ Yet the BDP's opposition was not in itself enough to prevent or constrain the AKP's policies.

Among the military elites, the situation was similar. In 2002, then general secretary of Turkey's National Security Council, General Tuncer Kilinç, said that Turkey should consider improvement of relations with Iran and Russia as an alternative to the EU.⁴⁴⁶ The same General later asserted that Turkey should dissociate itself from the hegemonic and exploitive US and NATO; he added

⁴⁴³ Ehteshami and Elik, "Turkey's Growing Relations with Iran and Arab Middle East," 654.

⁴⁴⁴ "Interview with Dr. Oktay Vural (Part II)," *Centre for Policy and Research on Turkey (ResearchTurkey)* II, no. 9 (November, 2013).

⁴⁴⁵ "Turkish Parliament approves motion on cross-border operations," *Justice and Development Party (AK Parti)*(2013), <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/haberler/turkish-parliament-approves-motion-on-cross-border-operations/53149>. It should be reminded that the Turkish operations were at times supported by Syria, Iran and Iraq; therefore, while the BDP was not opposed to Turkey's relations with Syria and Iran per se, it did express its opposition to their operations against the Kurdish militants.

⁴⁴⁶ Özden Zeynep Oktav, "Changing Security Perceptions in Turkish-Iranian Relations," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* IX, no. 2 (2004): 110.

that one of the Western targets is “to enlarge that state [Iraqi Kurdistan] against Turkey and other neighboring countries.”⁴⁴⁷ Clearly, the Kurdish threat was very important to the Kemalists who sought better relations with Syria and Iran to manage it. Therefore, despite their clash with the AKP, which created domestic tensions in civil-military relations,⁴⁴⁸ their foreign policy approaches on this matter coincided, while the AKP’s ideology further favoured the deepening of Turkey’s relations with Iran and Syria, especially after it gradually consolidated its domestic institutional role, mostly after 2007.⁴⁴⁹

In terms of public opinion, the main characteristics that played a role in Turkish-Iranian relations were again the anti-American and anti-Western feelings, which allowed Turkey to develop closer relations with its neighbourhood. Particularly, in 2004 a USAK survey found, among other things, that the number one threat to Turkey was perceived to be the US, while Iran was ranked ninth, notably after Greece, Armenia, Israel and Russia.⁴⁵⁰ These public opinion perceptions, which are very similar to those cited for the case of Syria, did not pressure the AKP’s foreign policy to adopting a different stance from the one already followed on Iran and Syria; they rather

⁴⁴⁷ "Retired generals attend London ADD conference," *Today's Zaman* (29/05/2007), <http://todayszaman.com/news-112551-retired-generals-attend-london-add-conference.html>.

⁴⁴⁸ "Ergenekon-linked generals renowned for hawkish stance," *Today's Zaman* (09/01/2009), <http://todayszaman.com/news-163637-ergenekon-linked-generals-renowned-for-hawkish-stance.html>; "Former general admits having told Ecevit to hand over party," *Today's Zaman* (23/02/2013), <http://todayszaman.com/news-272313-former-general-admits-having-told-ecevit-to-hand-over-party.html>.

⁴⁴⁹ Dariush Zahedi and Gökhan Bacık, "Kemalism is Dead, Long Live Kemalism," *Foreign Affairs* (23/04/2010), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/66391/dariush-zahedi-and-gokhan-bacik/kemalism-is-dead-long-live-kemalism>; Altunışık and Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP," 574.

⁴⁵⁰ USAK, *USAK II. Foreign Policy Perception Survey* (Ankara: International Strategic Research Organization (USAK), October, 2004).

complemented the domestic and regional environment within which the government's policy emerged. These might not seem as noteworthy findings but they do highlight the reasons why public opinion supported the AKP. As noted earlier, the particular value of this observation will become clearer later on, when compared to the reasons and results of public opinion opposition in Turkey's post-2011 foreign policy.

All in all, the pragmatic and material – security and economic – interests, that led the military-backed government of 2002 to improve its relations with Iran, remained largely the same in the AKP period. These were influenced by the business elites and supported silently or openly by the main opposition parties and public opinion. What is more, the shift in elite ideology that occurred with the coming of the AKP to power tore down the main ideological barriers between secular Turkey and theocratic Iran, despite the existence of historical intra-religious differences. Similarly, the consolidation of the AKP's domestic power over the Kemalist establishment allowed for further integration between Iran as well as Syria. In this sense, domestic dynamics played an instrumental role in bringing Iran and Turkey closer together, and a complementary role in the AKP's efforts to sustain and deepen the relationship.

Intervening Variables and the Role of Iran in the AKP's Syria Security Policy

Generally, Iran's role in Turkey's Syria policy should not be seen independently from Turkey's broader Middle East policy, and that is because in systemic and geopolitical terms Syria and Iran constituted a security axis which

Turkey had joined as a response to regional developments and power shifts. Given the close partnership between Syria and Iran, the betterment of Turkish-Iranian relations has favoured the deepening of Turkish-Syrian relations.

Ultimately, security cooperation between the two countries was founded on economic cooperation and interdependence, and that was paralleled with improvements in the same sectors between Turkey and Syria as the domestic interest groups variables showed. Moreover, as it has been argued, mutual economic and security concerns prevailed over – although they did not completely marginalise – ideological differences both between the Kemalists and the Iranian elites as well as between the AKP's Sunni political Islamism and Iran's Shiism.⁴⁵¹ This contributes to the understanding of the primary and secondary drivers of TFP – with systemic, material drivers being the primary ones – and of Turkish-Iranian-Syrian relations. It clarifies the fact that this partnership has been mainly based on mutual material interests, but it also suggests the relationship could potentially be undermined by ideological differences or by different interests that stem from the parties' particular ideological convictions – especially in the case of Turkey and Iran.

Overall, Iran played a role in Turkey's Syria security policies and vice versa – i.e. Turkish-Syrian relations played a role in Turkey's Iran security policies. That was the case because of the crucial cooperation between Iran and Syria and because domestic actors maintained a similar stance towards Turkey's relations with the two countries. In turn, therefore, if Turkey had

⁴⁵¹ Bayram Sinkaya, "Rationalization of Turkey-Iran Relations: Prospects and Limits," *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 2 (2012): 138.

hostile relations with either Iran or Syria, it would be very difficult to maintain overall good relations with one or the other party, respectively. This becomes clearer in the case of the Syrian civil war after 2011.

5.3. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to analyse TFP towards Syria under the AKP, between 2002-2011, in the context of regional geopolitical changes and developments, as well as domestic dynamics. It focused on the two domestic/intervening variables, the AKP elite ideology, and domestic interest groups, while it examined both the economic and security policies of Turkey through two sub-case studies, respectively. The first looked at Turkey's deepening economic and trade relations with Syria and thus the growing economic interdependence between the two countries. The second examined the role of Iran in Turkish-Syrian security relations.

Economic interests and business elites played a significant role in Turkey's turn to the Middle East and Syria in particular. However, security threats and concerns seem to have been more important for the initial rapprochement of Turkey with Syria as well as with Iran. This confirms that threat perceptions, as they develop after systemic power changes, are more important than economic relations, which again puts economic interdependence at the bottom of the independent variables hierarchy. Moreover, the strengthening of the AKP and its elite ideology within the country post-2007, allowed for even deeper relations between Turkey and Syria at the expense of Turkey-West relations despite objections from Kemalist elites and opposition parties; the support of

public opinion proved more important. Thus economic interdependence grew even more as well as security cooperation. Although these policy sectors and their relationship are further analysed in the final chapter of the thesis, an initial observation would be that among the domestic drivers – which are secondary to systemic ones – elite ideology and public opinion are the most important ones for TFP, in this order.

6. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Israel and Intervening Variables

After the historic breakthrough in Turkish-Israeli relations in 1996, the AKP period was the one that saw the two countries going from amity to (relative) enmity. A number of reasons are often cited for this change, including the AKP ideology and by extension the changes in Turkey's threat perceptions, the deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the developed friction between the West and regional countries after the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the gradual decline in the US power and the emergence of a conflictual Turkey-US relationship, as well as the emotional management of bilateral problems by the respective leaderships.⁴⁵²

The changing threat perceptions and the failure of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process are categorised as the main system-level factors that affected TFP towards Israel. In terms of the former, the shift in threat perceptions led to the rapprochement between Turkey, Syria and Iran. Taking into account that the threat perceptions Turkey and Israel shared regarding Syria and Iran played a central role in the formation of their alliance in 1996, it is easy to see how the alleviation of those threats dissolved the primary link between Turkey and Israel.⁴⁵³ On the other hand, Israel's failure to resume peace talks with the

⁴⁵² Shlomo Brom, "The Israeli-Turkish Relationship," in *Troubled Triangle: The United States, Turkey and Israel in the New Middle East*, ed. William B. Quandt (Charlottesville, Virginia: Just World Books, 2011), 60-61.

⁴⁵³ Marwan Kabalan, "Syria-Turkish Relations: Geopolitical Explanations for the Move from Conflict to Co-operation," in *Turkey-Syria Relations: Between Enmity and Amity*, ed. Raymond Hinnebusch and Özlem Tür (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), 27-37; Altunışık, "Explaining the Transformation of Turkish-Syrian Relations," 177-91; Meltem Müftüler-Bac, "Turkey and Israel: An Evolving Partnership,"

Palestinians at Camp David in 2000, and the second Palestinian Intifada that followed, increased Turkey's negative perception of Israel.⁴⁵⁴ This was later coupled with the Iraq war, and everything that came with it as analysed in the independent variables (chapter 4), which created the need for Turkey to adopt a more regionalized foreign policy; in addition, the deterioration in Turkey-US relations was reflected in Turkish-Israeli relations as well, since the latter complemented the former and constituted a pillar of US foreign policy in the region.

In this context, the role of domestic drivers in the gradual change of TFP towards Israel, and the gradual deterioration of bilateral relations are examined in two steps. First, by examining domestic dynamics (intervening variables) vis-à-vis incidents such as the 2008/09 Gaza war, the 2009 Davos incident, and the 2010 "Gaza flotilla" crisis, as the main referent points in the worsening trajectory of bilateral relations. Second, by looking at the role of Iran in the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations. This will place TFP within a broader regional and international context as well as provide an additional referent point of comparison between TFP towards Syria and Iran by revealing the dynamics of alliance formation (Turkey-Syria-Iran) and the negative changes in Turkish-Israeli relations.

Ariel Centre for Policy Research ACPR Policy Paper no. 47(1998); Robins, *Suits and Uniforms*: 244-70; Efraim Inbar, "The Resilience of Israeli-Turkish Relations," *Israel Affairs* 11, no. 4 (2005): 591-607.

⁴⁵⁴ Ofra Bengio, "Altercating Interests and Orientations between Israel and Turkey: A View from Israel," *Insight Turkey* 11, no. 2 (2009): 44-46.

6.1. Domestic Drivers and the Deterioration of Turkish-Israeli Relations

The increasingly negative turn in TFP towards Israel may seem reasonable considering the changing regional power balances. Yet, in light of the ground-breaking formation of the Turkish-Israeli strategic alliance in 1996 and their close military, security, diplomatic, economic and other cooperation, Turkey's stance – in spite of Israel's policies – may be more difficult to comprehend. Why would Turkey compromise its most important multileveled regional alliance? Did the Turkish-Israeli relationship and Turkey's rapprochement with Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hezbollah – among other regional actors – have to be mutually exclusive? Looking at Turkey's domestic dynamics through the two intervening variables, while keeping in mind the regional and international context, can give a more detailed insight about the AKP's foreign policy-making vis-à-vis Israel.

1st Intervening Variable: the AKP Elite Ideology

As noted repeatedly thus far, the AKP – and its ideology – is widely considered to be one of the most important domestic factors of change in TFP during the 2000s, not only with regard to Israel but more generally as well. The role of AKP elite ideology is here looked at as one of the domestic variables that should be taken into account. In terms of the AKP's Israel policy, Shlomo Brom specifically argues that the AKP has been at least partly driven by “Elements of Islamic political thinking and patterns of behaviour, and affinity with the

Islamic world.” This, he adds, brought Turkey closer to the Arabs and their perceptions vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli problems – most notably the Palestinian issue.⁴⁵⁵ If that is indeed the case then Turkey’s gradual dissociation from Israel could be interpreted as the result of the AKP’s particular (ideological) way of responding to international and regional changes.

In a 2012 speech, Davutoğlu said, “we are siding with the people of Homs, like we sided with the people of Sarajevo, like we sided with the people of Gaza against Israel, or Sarajevo against Milosevic.” He made the case that Turkey does not favour or discriminate against religious beliefs since, as he said, each of these oppressors had a different religious background. He added, “Oppression is oppression, and Turkey will be against any oppression in our region.”⁴⁵⁶ Contrary to the initial argument that AKP elites are largely driven by political Islamic principles, the FM’s remarks suggest that Turkey’s stance towards Israel, as well as its foreign policy more broadly, is based on (non-religious) moral principles.

Yet this was not the case when Turkey decided to neglect the violent crackdown of the Iranian regime on people protesting against the questionable election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2009 –Erdoğan said that such an action would constitute interference in Iran’s internal affairs.⁴⁵⁷ Nor did Turkey refrain from inviting the Sudanese President, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who was at the

⁴⁵⁵ Brom, "The Israeli-Turkish Relationship," 60.

⁴⁵⁶ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Objectives in a Changing World," *Speech at Center for Strategic & International Studies*(2012), <http://csis.org/event/turkeys-foreign-policy-objectives-changing-world>.

⁴⁵⁷ Robert Tait, "'Iran is our friend,' says Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan," *The Guardian*(26/10/2009), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/26/turkey-iran1>.

time indicted by the International Court of Justice for war crimes in Sudan's Darfur region.⁴⁵⁸ In this light, (non-religious) moral principles in TFP are employed in a selective manner and, therefore, they cannot justify Turkey's stance against Israel.⁴⁵⁹ It is more likely that this behaviour is driven by other pragmatic interests and ideological forces.

The AKP's opposition to Israeli policies – particularly towards the Palestinians – is perhaps as important as the ideological rhetoric that frames it. For example, Davutoğlu noted repeatedly in his *Strategic Depth* that the post-Cold War Turkish-Israeli alliance favoured Israel on multiple levels, while it generated widespread anti-Turkey feelings in the public opinion of the Arab peoples. Within this framework, he expressed the fear that the continuation of the close Turkish-Israeli relationship would result in the Arab and Islamic states distancing themselves from Turkey; therefore, he argues, Turkey's Middle East policy needs to be re-evaluated and reconfigured.⁴⁶⁰

Two things occur from this early approach of the FM: on the one hand, there is a pragmatic need for Turkey to improve relations with the Arab world, and Israel is an obstacle to that end. On the other hand, taking into account

⁴⁵⁸ Nicholas Birch and Sarah Childress, "Turkey Set to Host President of Sudan," *The Wall Street Journal* (06/11/2009), <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB125746406844432167>. As the article points out, Turkey is not a signatory to the International Court of Justice, "but still could have chosen to act on the warrant." Western actors, most notably the EU, opposed Turkey's intention to host the Sudanese President. Turkey defended its stance but eventually Bashir did not visit Istanbul. See, "Turkey defends Sudan leader visit," *BBC* (06/11/2009), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8347419.stm>; "Sudanese president not to visit Turkey," *Radio Netherlands Worldwide* (08/11/2009), <http://www.rnw.nl/english/article/sudanese-president-not-visit-turkey>.

⁴⁵⁹ It is not suggested that this kind of selectivity is a Turkish particularity or that it is unusual in international politics. Rather, it is argued that the moral principles cited from Turkey in the case of Israel are grounded – at least partly – in a specific set of (elite) ideas.

⁴⁶⁰ Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth*: 631-33.

other remarks about Turkey's affinity with its geo-cultural near-abroad, Israel is seen as a non-Arab (non-Muslim) state and its value for Turkey is calculated as such. In other words, Davutoğlu relates more to Turkey's Arab – not least, Muslim – neighbours rather than Israel and the Western camp – which reaffirms this thesis' assumptions about the AKP elite ideology and their perception of the region.

What is important in this discussion is that Turkey could have maintained a relative distance from and a critical stance towards Israel – for communicative purposes – without, however, endangering the alliance. The particularly harsh remarks of then Prime Minister Erdoğan did not make that possible. After the 2008/09 Israeli military operation "Cast Lead" against Gaza, the Turkish PM said that the war crimes of Israeli President Shimon Peres were greater than the ones of the Sudanese President, Bashir. He said that he did not believe that Bashir had committed those crimes and that Israel was being favoured because of its relationship with the West. Importantly enough, he added that, contrary to Israel, Bashir could not have committed such crimes as "It is not possible for those who belong to the Muslim faith to carry out genocide."⁴⁶¹ The PM suggested a Western political bias towards Israel while at the same time he himself demonstrated religious (and also political) bias towards Bashir,⁴⁶² and by extension, towards Israel – i.e. if Israel was Muslim it would not have

⁴⁶¹ "Turkey PM: Israel war crimes worse than Sudan," *Haaretz*(08/11/2009), <http://www.haaretz.com/news/turkey-pm-israel-war-crimes-worse-than-sudan-1.4547>.

⁴⁶² The bias is also political given that both Bashir and Hamas, with which AKP developed good relations, are political Islamists and not merely Muslim. However, it seems that politics and religious ideology are intertwined in this instance.

committed war crimes against the Palestinians. This is a clear ideological predisposition which is not limited to rhetoric but also correlates with Turkey's later Israel policy.

The PM's straightforwardness became even more obvious in the instance of the 2009 World Economic Forum in Davos, as described in chapter 4. There, Erdoğan said to Israeli President, Peres: "When it comes to killing, you know well how to kill."⁴⁶³ Next year, in the aftermath of the "Gaza flotilla" incident, Erdoğan accused Israel of state terrorism. Referring to one of the ten commandments of Jewish religious text, *Torah*,⁴⁶⁴ he remarked, "If you don't understand it in Turkish, I will say it in English: You shall not kill" – he then repeated the commandment in Hebrew.⁴⁶⁵ Equally provocative was the PM's statement – contrary to the Western political line – that Hamas was not a terror group but rather an organization defending their lands; and Israel was being anti-democratic for not accepting its election to power.⁴⁶⁶

Arguably, this was not diplomacy at its best. The principles on which Erdoğan's remarks were based were maybe right – and that was perhaps the case. But, again, considering the strong relationship between Turkey and Israel, a more diplomatic Turkish reaction would have been expected; perhaps similar to reactions of the previous establishment, such as President Ahmet Sezer's

⁴⁶³ Katrin Bennhold, "Leaders of Turkey and Israel Clash at Davos Panel," *The New York Times*(20/01/2009), http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/30/world/europe/30clash.html?_r=0.

⁴⁶⁴ The reference applies to Christian *Old Testament* as well.

⁴⁶⁵ "Erdogan: Aid ship raid is Israeli state terrorism," *Ynetnews.com*(31/05/201), <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3896963,00.html>.

⁴⁶⁶ "Erdogan: Hamas not terror group," *Ynetnews.com*(06/04/2013), <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3899117,00.html>.

2000 criticism of Israel for excessive use on Palestinians which, however, did not risk their strategic alliance.⁴⁶⁷ Erdoğan's reaction, and his increasingly negative stance towards Israel during the 2000s, did not seem to be about balancing interests but rather about standing by the Palestinians and the Arab world and making Israel's conduct of foreign policy difficult; the latter is more indicative of ideological incentives. In other words, it cannot simply be said that such remarks have strategic and communicative goals.

The connection between rhetoric and elite ideas becomes clearer when juxtaposed with 2012 remarks of current Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, who said that, Turkey "cannot turn a blind eye on what Israel has been doing in Gaza solely for the fact that we are strategic partners... We do not base our reactions on what other countries will think about them, instead we base our decision on whatever is right."⁴⁶⁸ Çavuşoğlu's remarks highlight the double-standards approach which was also identified earlier with regard to Turkey's response to the genocide accusations against the Muslim Sudanese President. That is, AKP elite morality is confined within the boundaries of political Islamic ideas and cannot be said that is employed merely for domestic or external (public opinion) consumption.

⁴⁶⁷ "Mid-East Talks to Ease Tension," *BBC*(25/10/2000), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/990118.stm.

⁴⁶⁸ "Interview with Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu: "Turkey's Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics in a Changing World", " *Centre for Policy and Research on Turkey (ResearchTurkey)* 1, no. 4.

It is exaggerated and sentimental remarks and attitude such as the ones of Erodğan that demonstrate ideologically driven behaviour.⁴⁶⁹ Of course, this kind of behaviour read against other remarks by Davutoğlu appears as materially driven as well. But while there are material incentives for distancing Turkey from Israel and bringing Turkey closer to the Arabs, as expressed through the analysis of the independent variables, the great degree of hostility against Israel seems unjustified and unnecessary. Thus, it renders ideological incentives primary among domestic variables but still secondary to systemic material pressures as it is propelled by them. The AKP's particular and largely ideologically-informed way of dealing with regional developments works as the primary domestic variable that intervenes between systemic changes and foreign policy outcomes.

A number of secondary sources affirm the this conclusion.⁴⁷⁰ In addition, according to researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer, even if the AKP does not like

⁴⁶⁹ Israel had earlier in the same year accused Erdoğan, and other Turkish officials, of anti-Semitism. See, Barak David, "Israel accuses Turkish PM of inciting anti-Semitism," *Haaretz*(26/01/2010), <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/israel-accuses-turkish-pm-of-inciting-anti-semitism-1.265790>. It is reminded that one of the tenets of traditional Turkish political Islam, which informs the AKP elite ideology, is anti-Semitism – although Erdogan said that he considers “anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and prejudice against Christianity crimes against humanity, whose common values and ethical rules oblige us to confront and reject all forms of discrimination.” See, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Turkey: The New Indispensable Nation," *Project Syndicate*(13/12/2010), <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/turkey--the-new-indispensable-nation>. Anti-Semitic, and not anti-Israeli sentiments, are how similar AKP remarks are interpreted by both domestic and foreign analysts and scholars, as well as by many of the interviewees. However, this does not mean that all AKP references to Israel are anti-Semitic but it rather highlights the underlying ideological principles of these elites.

⁴⁷⁰ E.g. Fatih Bayram, "Ideology and Political Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Erdogan's Political Speech," *ARECLS* 7(2010): 32-38; Behlul Ozkan, "Turkey's Imperial Fantasy," *The New York Times*(28/08/2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/29/opinion/ahmet-davutoglu-and-turkeys-imperial-fantasy.html>; Baskin Oran, "Turkey: Ideology in Foreign Policy," *Al-Monitor*(04/08/2014), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/politics/2013/08/turkey-arab-spring-foreign-policy->

Israel – or any other country – it should still maintain a realistic behaviour towards it by taking into account the realities on the ground and its importance in the international system. From that perspective, he argued that, “the idea [of zero problems] was perfect... but now [Turkish foreign policy-makers] became more arrogant; they started to assume that Turkey is the voice of the Islamic world, that they are the leader of the Middle East, but they ignored the other realities of the region and,” therefore, Turkey became isolated and was led to many mistakes in foreign policy-making, such as the one with Israel.⁴⁷¹ In addition to earlier-cited remarks that confirm this notion among the AKP elites, Erdoğan himself wrote:

...Turkey is following a proactive foreign policy stretching from the Balkans to the Middle East and the Caucasus. This geography is Turkey’s natural historical and cultural hinterland. Turkey’s cultural and historical links with the peoples of these regions are deep and conducive to regional peace.

Turkey cannot remain indifferent to this geography, for it stands at the center of it. History clearly shows that it is impossible to establish and sustain global peace without ensuring peace and stability in the Balkans and the Middle East.⁴⁷²

ideology.html#; Halil Karaveli, "Erdoğan's Achilles Heel," *Foreign Affairs*(08/08/2014), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/141841/halil-karaveli/erdogans-achilles-heel>.

⁴⁷¹ USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

Whether or not Turkey’s decisions vis-à-vis Israel were right is not of concern here. Rather, the thesis is interested in the role of elite ideas in the making of these decisions and foreign policy.

⁴⁷² Erdoğan, "Turkey: The New Indispensable Nation".

The rhetoric shows an AKP desire for a closer – historical and cultural – relationship between Turkey and the Arab and Muslim world at the expense of pragmatic and material relations with Israel as well as other Western allies. Erdoğan does not directly refer to religion but, considering that ethnicity and language are two of the cultural components that do not tie Turkey to the predominantly Arab region, religion is the most important feature that remains - which is also included in most definitions of culture.⁴⁷³ Relatedly, it should be remembered that Turkey's Ottoman past – a largely Islamic past – is a big part of Erdoğan's efforts to construct a basis for links with the Arab world. Moreover, according to former Turkish Ambassador Oktay Aksoy, it is not easy for a religious government in Turkey to neglect the Palestinian issue. This further supports the claim that AKP elite decisions have been at least partly ideologically-driven.⁴⁷⁴

Indeed, there is an effort from AKP elites to mitigate these ideological manifestations by referring to principles of justice and morality or by noting that their attitude and policies have nothing to do with religion – of others or their own. Yet this is inconsistent with the overall picture and TFP behaviour. To better understand this point, and how the AKP elite ideology intervened between systemic realities and the foreign policy outcome, one should perhaps picture what Turkey's "unfiltered" foreign policy behaviour, or the foreign policy behaviour of the previous establishment, would look like. Given what

⁴⁷³Fred E. Jandt, *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication: Identities in a Global Community*, 7th ed. (USA: SAGE, 2013). 4-33.

⁴⁷⁴ Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013.

the features of Kemalist foreign policy such as isolationism, *status quo*, pro-Westernism⁴⁷⁵ and non-involvement in the Middle East, one could safely argue that even if it attempted to approach the Arab world, it would not have done so by challenging its relations with Israel to such an extent. Not least because of the importance of the Turkish-Israeli axis for the US.

From this perspective, AKP elite ideology in TFP towards Israel in the 2000s and the deterioration of bilateral relations had a secondary yet important role. That is, external factors – changes in international power relations, external threat perceptions and international economic interdependencies - triggered the need for the reconfiguration of TFP. However, similar to the case of Syria, AKP elite ideology intervened as a filter and essentially shaped the content of the eventual foreign policy adjustment, which it is maintained would have been different had AKP not been in power: closer relations with Arabs and increasing distance from Israel to an unnecessarily great extent. This trend becomes more obvious later on in the midst of the geopolitical changes of the “Arab Spring” and the further worsening of the Turkey-Israel relationship.

2nd Intervening Variable: Domestic Interest Groups

At least some domestic interest groups played a role in preventing the negative Turkish elite anti-Israel sentiments from spreading to other sectors of cooperation between the two countries. At the same time, interest groups that

⁴⁷⁵ This is a somewhat paradoxical feature of Kemalist ideology considering that it also contains a strong suspicion towards Western countries as they played a role in the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire which led to the highly unfavourable, for Turkey, Treaty of Sèvres (1920). Yet, whereas Kemal Atatürk was suspicious of Western aims in Turkey and the region, it still aspired to the West, its economic development and level of modernity and wanted to emulate these features in Turkey.

opposed the AKP's Israel policy did not have enough power so as to effectively challenge the government. Yet, at times it seems that ostensibly unimportant groups contributed to domestic pressure against policies that would permanently damage Turkey's relations with Israel.

In the context of the 1996 breakthrough in Turkish-Israeli relations, the two countries also signed a Free Trade Agreement, and later on a double taxation prevention treaty and a bilateral investment treaty. Since then the economic relationship has been growing for the most part, with the volume of trade reaching 1.2 billion USD in 2002 from 449 million USD in 1996. The increase of the bilateral trade continued with an annual average of 14.6% between 2002 and 2008.⁴⁷⁶ As already mentioned, the military establishment was behind Turkey's rapprochement with Israel both for security and ideological reasons, given that Israel was a close Western ally and Turkey's alliance with it would thus lead to its further integration into the West, which was a traditional goal of Kemal Ataturk.

At the time, MÜSİAD organised a meeting to discuss this development. The general sentiment vis-à-vis the rapprochement was negative. Indicative of MÜSİAD's view were the keynote speeches given at the event. One of the keynote speakers was Ahmet Davutoğlu, then a university professor, who expressed the same views with the ones later written in his *Strategic Depth*. He

⁴⁷⁶ "Turkey-Israel Free Trade Agreement," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy*, <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=tradeagreements&bolum=fta&country=IL&r>; "Relations between Turkey and Israel," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-israel%20.en.mfa>; Çağaptay and Evans, "The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade Relations," 1.

said, among other things: "Military agreement with Turkey is the best policy for Israel, which aims to be a leader in the region and cut Turkey's relations with Muslim countries," adding that Turkey should adopt an independent foreign policy and improve its relations with other countries of the region – i.e. mainly the Arabs.⁴⁷⁷

This understanding of MÜSIAD is very much in line with the AKP's general approach towards the Middle East and Israel in particular. On the other hand, TÜSIAD demonstrated a more pragmatic approach when in 2009 it praised the bilateral economic relations which grew since 1996, and encouraged investments as well as the establishment of an "Israel-Turkey CEO Forum" which would bring together CEOs from the two countries. Further, its president Osman Boyne stressed that "it is important to keep communication channels open for the improvement of our relations."⁴⁷⁸

Importantly, TÜSIAD's call for deeper and improved relations came after Israel's attack on Gaza and the Davos incident. This demonstrates TÜSIAD's dissociation from politics and the pragmatism of businessmen – at least the ones of TÜSIAD.⁴⁷⁹ It is worth noting that MÜSIAD's stance somewhat changed

⁴⁷⁷ "Turkey-Israel cooperation is discussed by MUSIAD," *Hürriyet Daily News*(25/06/1996), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-israel-cooperation-is-discussed-by-musiad.aspx?pageID=438&n=turkey-israel-cooperation-is-discussed-by-musiad-1996-06-25>.

⁴⁷⁸ Osman Boyner, "The Speech Delivered by Mr. Osman Boyner, TÜSIAD International President: Invest in Israel," *TÜSIAD* (23/11/2009): 3.

⁴⁷⁹ This was also the case when in 2010 tensions arose between Turkey and the US regarding a US congressional committee resolution for the recognition of the Armenian genocide by the Ottoman Empire. Despite the tensions, and its initial decision not to go through with a scheduled meeting to the US, TÜSIAD eventually decided to realize the trip in order not to further strain the bilateral relations. This corresponds to previous observations that have been made regarding the pragmatism and interest-based behaviour of business circles despite political tensions. See, "TÜSIAD to visit US despite tensions,"

over time and, as Dilek Yankaya argues, became more Europeanized – just like the AKP – especially between 2001 and 2004 although it was again followed by Euroscepticism.⁴⁸⁰ This justifies at least partly Ali Engin Oba's claim that TÜSIAD and MÜSIAD may have differences but they are not enemies and thus they also cooperate.⁴⁸¹

However, after the "Gaza flotilla" incident, although all actors in Turkey – apart, perhaps, from the PKK⁴⁸² – condemned Israel's actions, the rhetoric used was different. TÜSIAD called the incident "one of the most tragic examples of the disproportionate and excessive use of military power against a civilian initiative" and called for UN action.⁴⁸³ MÜSIAD, which has been said to have "played a major role in funding the flotilla by 'coordinating' donations,"⁴⁸⁴ used harsher language, very similar to the AKP's:

...Israel has shown the entire world that it will not allow any peaceful attempt in the region and will not respect human rights. The

Today's Zaman (24/03/2010),

http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=205257.

⁴⁸⁰ Dilek Yankaya, "The Europeanization of MÜSIAD: Political opportunism, Economic Europeanization, Islamic Euroscepticism," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 9(2009): 8-11.

⁴⁸¹ Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Dr. Ali Engin Oba. Interview with the author, Ankara, 12 June 2013.

International Coordinator and EU Representative, TÜSIAD, Brussels Branch, Dr. Bahadır Kaleağasi. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013. Dr. Bahadır Kaleağasi of TÜSIAD also supported that there is no adversarial relationship between TÜSIAD and MÜSIAD. However, a previous remark by Dr. Kaleağasi regarding MÜSIAD's political affiliations with the AKP, was also supported by Dr. Oba who said that the AKP receives great support from Anatolian businessmen – many of which are represented by MÜSIAD.

⁴⁸² Mehmet Ali Birand, "PKK happy with Israel incident," *Hürriyet Daily News*(06/09/2010),

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/pkk-happy-with-israel-incident.aspx?pageID=438&n=pkk-happy-with-israel-incident-2010-06-09>.

⁴⁸³ "TUSIAD: Terrorist Attack and Israeli Military Operation," *TÜSIAD*(01/06/2010),

<http://www.tusiad.us/press-releases/terrorist-attack-and-israeli-military-operation/>.

⁴⁸⁴ Steve G. Merley, *Turkey, the Global Muslim Brotherhood and the Gaza Flotilla* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2011). 9.

attack cannot be approved or backed by any nation in the world. World leaders do not have the luxury to hide themselves behind mere statements. It is high time the world said 'stop' to the perpetrators of the bloody assault.⁴⁸⁵

Despite these reactions, as noted earlier, the post-flotilla volume of trade between Turkey and Israel, in 2011, not only did not decline but reached a record high with a sum of 4.44 billion USD. In terms of the business associations this could mean three things, not necessarily mutually exclusive: at least in the case of Israel, business is indeed dissociated from politics mainly because of the liberalisation of Turkish economy,⁴⁸⁶ business associations managed to pressure the government to not cut off economic ties,⁴⁸⁷ and that the fact that MÜSİAD's "constituent businesses represent [only] 15% of the Turkish national income"⁴⁸⁸ does not allow it to greatly harm the economic relations between the two countries even if it decided to boycott Israel.

⁴⁸⁵ "Israeli assault on Gaza flotilla draws sharp reaction from Turkish civil society," *Today's Zaman* (31/05/2010), <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/news-211688-israeli-assault-on-gaza-flotilla-draws-sharp-reaction-from-turkish-civil-society.html>.

⁴⁸⁶ This point is underpinned by other evidence as well. See, for example, Atli, "Businessmen as Diplomats."; Mustafa Kutlay, "Economy as the 'Practical Hand' of 'New Turkish Foreign Policy': A Political Economy Explanation," *Insight Turkey* 13, no. 1 (2001). Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013.

⁴⁸⁷ Most interviewees agreed that business associations have at least some impact on foreign policy-making. Yet there is a consensus that often PM Erdoğan's decisions predominate over other domestic pressures. Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013; academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; Chairman of the Scientific Committee at International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) Dr. İhsan Bal. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Ali Engin Oba. Interview with the author, Ankara, 12 June 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013.

⁴⁸⁸ Merley, *Turkey, the Global Muslim Brotherhood and the Gaza Flotilla*: 38.

Confirming at least the first one, Bahadır Kaleağasi, TÜSİAD's International Coordinator and EU Representative in Brussels, said that TÜSİAD did not have a big and direct role in influencing the government towards the preservation of economic relations and yet its policy was to maintain good relations with Israel, independent of political problems, and to prevent the political crisis to spread to other sectors – such as the economy.⁴⁸⁹ This inconsistency between Turkey's political and economic foreign relations becomes clearer in the post-“Arab Spring” period when the crisis between Turkey and Israel develops even more.

When it came to the domestic political opposition, parties like the CHP, the MHP and the BDP united in condemnation of Israel regarding its policies towards the Palestinians and particularly the “Gaza flotilla” incident.⁴⁹⁰ In that sense they supported the AKP's criticism and frustration as well. Yet later on, the opposition accused the AKP government of being silent about the Israeli raid on Gaza flotilla. Specifically, Kemal Kiliçdaroğlu of the CHP characterized the AKP's policies “two- faced” while he questioned its decision to allow the flotilla to travel to Gaza despite Israeli warnings.⁴⁹¹ He also argued that PM Erdoğan's harsh rhetoric was not followed by actions.

⁴⁸⁹ International Coordinator and EU Representative, TÜSİAD, Brussels Branch, Dr. Bahadır Kaleağasi. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013.

⁴⁹⁰ Yusuf Kanlı, "Israel Unites Turkey ", *Hürriyet Daily News*(01/06/2010), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/israel-unites-turkey.aspx?pageID=438&n=israel-unites-turkey-2010-06-01>.

⁴⁹¹ "CHP to present Parliament motion on gov't actions over Israeli raid," *Today's Zaman* (09/06/2010), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-212572-chp-to-present-parliament-motion-on-govt-actions-over-israeli-raid.html>.

At the same time, the CHP, as the biggest and most important opposition party, did not advocate for an anti-Israeli foreign policy. On the contrary, Kılıçdaroğlu argued in an interview that the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations harmed Turkey⁴⁹² while CHP deputy chairman Osman Faruk Loğoğlu said that “the AKP is provoking anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli tendencies in Turkish society to expand its electoral constituency.” He added that, the “CHP favours setting up friendly ties and improved economic relations with Israel.”⁴⁹³ Moreover, in agreement with officials of the CHP and BDP, Devlet Bahçeli of the MHP maintained that the AKP was putting up a “show” by exploiting the “Gaza flotilla” incident for populist reasons.⁴⁹⁴ For its part, the BDP’s spokesperson noted BDP “would not overlook the events in Palestine,” but highlighted Turkey’s double standards in that it supports the Palestinians but not the Kurds; a fact that will make it difficult for AKP “to preserve the sense of citizenship or to unite the country.”⁴⁹⁵

From that perspective it is seen that although the verbal response of the Turkish government to the “Gaza flotilla” incident was ideologically driven, the practical aspect of the AKP’s reaction did not satisfy the opposition as they thought that AKP fell short in taking decisive actions against Israel. It can be suggested that opposition parties, too, tried to exploit the overall negative feelings about Israel at the time of the crisis for political reasons. However,

⁴⁹² Kılıçdaroğlu, "Interview with Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu," 28.

⁴⁹³ CHP Deputy Chairman Osman Faruk Loğoğlu Interview with the author, Ankara, 30 September 2013.

⁴⁹⁴ "Turkish Opposition Slams Government's Israeli Policy," *Hürriyet Daily News*(08/06/2010), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-opposition-slams-governments-israeli-policy.aspx?pageID=438&n=chp-leader-kilicdaroglu-criticizes-pm-2010-06-08>.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

neither did the opposition want the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations nor the dissolution of the alliance.⁴⁹⁶ On the other hand, according to experts and as seen later on, the stance of the opposition parties seemed like a factor that prevented Turkey's endorsement of the 2011 second "Gaza flotilla" which eventually failed, as well as the harsher response towards Israel after the release of the UN report regarding the first flotilla.⁴⁹⁷ These outcomes are further examined in Turkey's post-"Arab Spring" foreign policy and are compared to previous policy-making processes.

In terms of other domestic forces, such as the military and public opinion, they had a limited or endorsing role. As argued above, by the time Turkey and Israel had reached the lowest point of their relations in the 2000s, which was the crisis over the "Gaza flotilla," the military establishment had lost most of its role. Given the part that the military had played in the formation of the Turkish-Israeli alliance by bypassing the Islamist PM Erbakan, and the post-modern coup it staged against the same PM, partly due to his rapprochement with the Arab/Muslim world, one could have easily imagined a strong military opposition to the AKP's aggressive Israel policy. Moreover, its severed and

⁴⁹⁶ Despite shortcomings in bilateral economic and trade relations the volume of trade maintained and increasing tendency. And even though the strategic alliance was not dissolved diplomatic relations and security cooperation was strained while the trust between the two countries was significantly diminished. See, for example, "Israeli Supermarkets Boycott Turkish Products," *Hürriyet Daily News*(14/06/2010), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=israeli-supermarkets-boycott-turkish-products-2010-06-14>; Çağaptay and Evans, "The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade Relations," 1.

⁴⁹⁷ Kristin J. Bender, "Activist talks about failed mission to reach the Gaza Strip," *San Jose Mercury News*(08/07/2011), http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_18442144. Also, Chairman of the Scientific Committee at International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) Dr. İhsan Bal. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

silent role corresponds to its inability to influence foreign policy-making in other cases that have been examined as well, specifically after 2007 and the AKP's second term, as argued in the analysis of the AKP elite ideology.

Lastly, the public opinion expressed a strong opposition to Israel's actions through massive protests while it has been noted that already from Israel's attacks against Gaza (2008/09) anti-Semitic sentiments have been on the rise in Turkey.⁴⁹⁸ The term anti-Semitism is not accidental here. Further to previous elaboration in this thesis on anti-Semitism at the elite level, it has been widely argued⁴⁹⁹ that Turkish society is largely anti-Semitic and these feelings were enhanced after the "Gaza flotilla" incident.⁵⁰⁰ As Rifat Bali notes, "The

⁴⁹⁸ Miguel Marquez, "Anger Against Israel Grows in Turkey," *abc news*(01/06/2010), <http://abcnews.go.com/International/Media/turks-protest-israel-gaza-flotilla-sinking/story?id=10793857>; Amberin Zaman, "After Gaza: Rising anti-Semitism in Turkey?," *The German Marshall Fund of the United States* (29/01/2009).

⁴⁹⁹ E.g. Abraham H. Foxman, "Erdogan's 'Reassuring' Words to Turkey's Jews are Antyhing But," *The World Post*(30/07/2014), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/abraham-h-foxman/erdogans-reassuring-words_b_5634755.html; Joost Lagendijk, "Did Erdoğan forget about zero tolerance for anti-Semitism?," *Today's Zaman* (24/05/2014), http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/joost-lagendijk_348645_did-erdogan-forget-about-zero-tolerance-for-anti-semitism.html; Orhan Kemal Cengiz, "Is there anti-Semitism in Turkey?," *Today's Zaman* (11/09/2014), https://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/orhan-kemal-cengiz/is-there-anti-semitism-in-turkey_358416.html; "AK Party's anti-Semitic, anti-Western rhetoric a dangerous trend," *Today's Zaman* (16/05/2014), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-342054-ak-partys-anti-semitic-anti-western-rhetoric-a-dangerous-trend.html>. Also, Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013; CHP Parliamentary Assistant Kivanç Özcan. Interview with the author, Ankara, 24 September 2013; Academic Dr. Louis Fishman. Phone interview with the author, 09 January 2014; President of Strategy International Dr. Marios Efthymiopoulos. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 26 January 2013.

⁵⁰⁰ Of course anti-Semitism is not new in Turkey, or in the Middle East more generally. A Pew Research Centre survey found that Turkish anti-Semitic attitudes in 2005 and 2006 were at 60 and 65 percent respectively. According to the same institute, Turkish unfavourable attitudes of Jews reached 76 percent in 2008; a number which was, however, around 20 percent lower than in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon. The trend was similar in 2009. Although in surveys conducted after the Gaza flotilla incident (2010) present similar results, it has been argued and reported that incidents of anti-Semitism have increased while anti-Semitic attitudes in Turkey remained on high levels up to 2014. See, respectively, Gregg J. Rickman, ed. *Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism: A Report Provided to the United States Congress* (Washington: United States Department of State, 2008), 34; "Antisemitism in the Turkish Media: Part 1," *The Middle East Media Research Institute*(28/04/2005),

predictable result of such an extraordinarily hostile atmosphere was the demonization not only of the terms *Zionism*, but of *Israel* and *Jew* as well."⁵⁰¹

What is more, this notion is confirmed by a recent survey that showed that, "Sixty-nine [69] percent of all adults in Turkey harbor anti-Semitic attitudes."⁵⁰² After all, the exploitation of these popular anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic feelings, as stated earlier, was one of the criticisms of the political opposition to the AKP and PM Erdoğan. In this sense, the AKP's anti-Israeli rhetoric was responding to public opinion as that would solidify and increase its electoral base thus contributing to a more secure third re-election. This populist behaviour is again evident in the wake of the next decade, and the greater deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations.

Intervening Variables and the Deterioration of Turkish-Israeli Relations

There is an evident inconsistency in TFP towards Israel. Although the relations between the two countries declined significantly by the end of the

<http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/1365.htm>; Antisemitism in the Turkish Media (Part II) - Turkish Intellectuals Against Antisemitism, (05/05/2005), <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/1371.htm>; Zaman, "After Gaza: Rising anti-Semitism in Turkey?."; Amir Mizroch, "Poll: 90% of ME views Jews unfavorably," *The Jerusalem Post* (02/09/2010), <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Poll-90-percent-of-ME-views-Jews-unfavorably>; "Gaza flotilla raid increased global anti-Semitism, study finds," *Haaretz* (23/01/2011), <http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/gaza-flotilla-raid-increased-global-anti-semitism-study-finds-1.338753>; "USCIFR Annual Report 2011 - The Commission's Watch List: Turkey," *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom* (28/04/2011), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4dbe90b611.html>; Tali Farkash, "Jews flee Turkey over anti-Semitism," *Ynetnews.com* (24/10/2013), <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4445055,00.html>; "Global survey finds 2 in 3 adults in Turkey anti-Semitic," *Today's Zaman* (20/05/2014), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-348280-global-survey-finds-2-in-3-adults-in-turkey-anti-semitic.html>; "ADL Global 100," Anti-Defamation League, <http://global100.adl.org/#map>.

⁵⁰¹ Rifat N. Bali, "The Banalization of Hate: Antisemitism in Contemporary Turkey," in *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), 316.

⁵⁰² "Global survey finds 2 in 3 adults in Turkey anti-Semitic".

2000s, their economic relations increased. On the one hand, there was an ideological predisposition among the AKP elites towards Israel which became more salient against the backdrop of regional changes and rising Turkish threat perceptions of the West. On the other hand, until the end of 2010 this set of ideas was expressed mostly on a rhetorical level rather than in actual policies. The inaction of the AKP was highlighted by political parties of the opposition, while at the same time these parties questioned the AKP's motives behind its decisions vis-à-vis Israel and blamed it to a large extent for the deterioration of the bilateral relationship.

Business groups seem to have played a role in maintaining good trade relations by having a more pragmatic perspective. The military did not manage to play a role despite the fact that the deterioration in Turkish-Israeli relations would be against its foreign policy orientation. Lastly, public opinion very much shared the anti-Israeli sentiments expressed by the AKP. The pressuring or silent role of these domestic groups becomes clearer when the relations of Turkey and Israel hit a new low in 2011.

Overall, an important conclusion that could be drawn from the above-mentioned analysis, is that domestic interest groups, of which public opinion and business groups could be seen as being the most significant, are often able to influence policy-making or certain policy sectors (i.e. economy) insofar as substantial issues such as security are not at stake. This was demonstrated in the ability of business groups to maintain good trade relations, but their general inability to influence Turkish-Israeli political relations. Public opinion is also

important, given the AKP's need to stay in power, but it seems that in this case AKP elite ideology corresponds well with public opinion sentiments. This is a quite complex conclusion regarding the role of domestic actors in the making of TFP, one that has not been found in other relevant works. Specifically, even domestic level analyses of TFP have not pointed out which domestic factors or groups are most important in policy-making, that is, the hierarchy of their importance; nor have they identified the foreign policy sectors these groups could influence or the extent to which they could do so.⁵⁰³ It is later seen that in the post-2011 case of Syria, the relationship between AKP elite ideology and public opinion in particular is different.

6.2. Domestic Drivers and the Role of Iran in Turkey's Israel Policy

Analysing the role of Iran in Turkey's Israel policy is something that will allow the comparison and contrast of TFP towards an Arab state (Syria) and a non-Arab state (Israel) in the context of regional dynamics, alliances and domestic politics, through the examination of the third non-Arab state of the region (i.e. Iran). Again, as explained in the case of Syria, Iran and Syria reflect Turkey's non-Western foreign policy orientation – since for the US and Western powers they were adversaries during this period – while Israel reflects Turkey's

⁵⁰³ See for example, Tür and Altunışık, "From Distant Neighbours to Partners? Changing Syrian-Turkish Relations," 217-36; Tür, "Economic Relations with the Middle East Under the AKP - Trade, Business Community and Reintegration with Neighboring Zones," 589-602; Başkan, "The Rising Islamic Business Elite and Democratization in Turkey."; Kutlay, "Economy as the 'Practical Hand' of 'New Turkish Foreign Policy': A Political Economy Explanation."; Erdoğan, "The Missing Element."; Altunışık and Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP," 569-87; Mufti, *Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea*.

Westward foreign policy, given that it is perhaps the most important American ally in the region. Therefore, this thesis looks at how – and if – Turkey’s rapprochement with Iran affected Turkish-Israeli relations or vice versa.

Since the ideological relationship between Turkey and Iran, Syria and Israel has already been analysed, as well as the role of domestic groups in TFP towards Iran, Syria and Israel, these insights are used without repeating the analysis. Hence, the analysis of this case study will also be shorter than the previous ones. Moreover given the lack of adequate news reports and official documents on the subject, the analysis is more reliant on interviews.

1st Intervening Variable: the AKP Elite Ideology

In terms of the AKP elite ideology with regard to Iran and Israel a few observations stand out from the previous analysis. The emergence of political Islam in Turkey and particularly the AKP has contributed to the improvement of Turkish-Iranian relations. The AKP sees Iran as part of Turkey’s history and culture while AKP officials refer to Iranians as friends and brothers. Dinçer, talking about the pre-“Arab Spring” era, stated that: “Islamists in Turkey used to believe that Iran is an Islamic country, that they are our brothers and sisters and we should have close relations with Iran because they wouldn’t harm us, they are our friends and brothers.”⁵⁰⁴

At the same time, among AKP elites, there is an awareness of Turkish-Iranian historical and intra-religious differences (i.e. Sunni-Shia) which

⁵⁰⁴ USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

increases the efforts to avoid a confrontation. In terms of Israel, AKP elites believe that it has been an obstacle to Turkey's better relations with the Middle East. This is neither unrelated to the already mentioned ideological anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli predispositions of AKP elites, nor to Turkey's disagreement with the Western and Israeli policy of sanctions and coercion towards Iran.

However, a view shared by many holds that Turkey's improved relations with Iran did not play a role in the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations. In this sense, ideological predispositions worked separately in each case; that is, the worldviews of AKP elites played a role in bringing Turkey and Iran closer together as well as in driving Turkey and Israel further apart.⁵⁰⁵ But a connection between the development of the two relationships has not been suggested – as Tür said, “they were not mutually exclusive.”⁵⁰⁶

Nevertheless, supporters of this argument agreed that after 2008 the closer relationship between Turkey and Iran played a role in the cooling of Turkish-Israeli relations.⁵⁰⁷ Tür argued that this contributed especially to Israel's view of

⁵⁰⁵ Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, "Turkey & Iran: Islamic Brotherhood or Regional Rivalry," *Al Jazeera Centre for Studies* (June, 2013): 3-4; Brom, "The Israeli-Turkish Relationship," 60-61; Efraim Inbar, "The Strategic Implications for Israel," in *The Arab Spring, Democracy and Security: Domestic and International Ramifications*, ed. Efraim Inbar (New York: Routledge, 2013), 155-56.

⁵⁰⁶ Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013; and conversation with Turkish Academic no. 1, Ankara, 13 June 2013. Turkey's support of Iran's nuclear program between 2009 and 2011 also played a role. See, for example, Aaron Stein and Philipp C. Bleek, "Turkish-Iranian Relations: From 'Friends with Benefits' to 'It's Complicated'," *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 4 (2012): 142.

⁵⁰⁷ Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013. Even after the breakout of the "Arab Spring" and Syria's civil war when Turkish-Iranian relations deteriorated, in 2012 Turkey reportedly disclosed to Iran the identities of ten Iranians that travelled to Turkey to meet Israeli spies thus undermining Israeli intelligence gathering. The incident was cited as another case of Turkey's effort to appeal to the Arab/Muslim world and proof of sustained Turkish-Iranian relations – as opposed to the deteriorated Turkish-Israeli ones. Although Turkey later rejected the claims, Israeli officials

Turkey and its relations with Iran. Right after the deadly incident on the “Mavi Marmara” ship in 2010, Tür said, most political circles and parties in Israel were talking about it and Turkey, as well as about how Erdoğan and then Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad were “almost the same.” This notion was so prevalent that one official said that Ahmadinejad whispers something to Erdoğan’s ear and he would then go and say it to the public.⁵⁰⁸ Bacık argued that Turkey kept some distance from Israel in order to maintain or develop good relations with other actors – such as Arab states, Iran, Hamas, etc. – but from one point onwards – notably after 2008/09 – this distance increased greatly and, as argued earlier, unnecessarily.⁵⁰⁹

As mentioned previously, the AKP had by 2008 consolidated most of its power over the military establishment which gave it more freedom in making

criticised Turkey for anti-Israeli policies. See, Adam Entous and Joe Parkinson, "Turkey's Spymaster Plots Own Course on Syria," *The Wall Street Journal* (10/10/2013), <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303643304579107373585228330>; David Ignatius, "Turkey blows Israel's cover for Iranian spy ring," *The Washington Post* (16/10/2013), http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/david-ignatius-turkey-blows-israels-cover-for-iranian-spy-ring/2013/10/16/7d9c1eb2-3686-11e3-be86-6aeaa439845b_story.html; Ivan Watson and Gul Tuysuz, "Turkey rejects claims it blew Israeli agents' cover," *CNN* (17/10/2013), <http://edition.cnn.com/2013/10/17/world/meast/turkey-israeli-intelligence-leak/>; "Turkey revealed Israeli spy ring to Iran-report," *Reuters* (17/10/2013), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/17/israel-turkey-iran-idUSL6N0I71EK20131017>.

⁵⁰⁸ Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013 Tür also mentioned banners in Israeli demonstrations reading “Erdoğan = Ahmadinejad.” In support of this dynamic between Turkey, Iran and Israel see also, Carol Migdalovitz, "Israel's Blockade of Gaza, the *Mavi Marmara* Incident, and its Aftermath," *Congressional Research Service*, CRS Report for Congress (June, 2010): 13-14. For an Israeli comparison of Erdoğan and Ahmadinejad see, Douglas M. Bloomfield, "Washington Watch: Is Erdogan the new Ahmadinejad?," *The Jerusalem Post* (17/07/2013), <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/Washington-Watch-Is-Erdogan-the-new-Ahmadinejad-320171>.

⁵⁰⁹ Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013. See also, Moran Stern and Dennis Ross, "The Role of Syria in Israeli-Turkish Relations," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* (Summer/Fall, 2013): 123-24; Nimrod Goren, "An Unfulfilled Opportunity for Reconciliation: Israel and Turkey During the Arab Spring," *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 2 (2012): 128.

policies and decisions. This widely acceptable observation, coupled with the party's and Erdoğan's increasing authoritarianism – which alienated various AKP partners and supporters – added a more ideological (political Islamic) character to the AKP elite rhetoric and policies.⁵¹⁰ Thus, on the one hand it is accepted that there has been a domestic transformation with regard to the AKP and its ideology, as argued by others, but on the other hand it is clarified that change in TFP towards Israel cannot be attributed primarily or only to this transformation. Without systemic changes prompting a TFP response, the AKP elite ideology would not itself trigger a change in foreign policy reflective of the domestic ideological transformation in question.

In sum, it can be seen that although structural and security issues played a role in the development of Turkey's relations with Iran at first, up to 2002, the AKP elite ideology helped these relations grow, ultimately at the expense of the Turkey-West relations (see, for example, the 2010 Turkish support for the Iranian nuclear program). In terms of Israel, the external structural realities of the 2000s were primary in calling for a foreign policy reconfiguration and a

⁵¹⁰ Hugh Pope, "Erdoğan's Decade," *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs* 4 (Winter, 2012): 51-52; Ekin Ozbakkaloglu, "Turkey Attempts to Curtail Judicial Independence," *Global Risk Insights*(22/02/2014), <http://globalriskinsights.com/2014/02/22/turkey-attempts-to-curtail-judicial-independence/>; Tony Cross, "Erdogan defends Islamic AKP's pro-business record in Turkey's presidential election," *Radio France International English*(31/07/2014), <http://www.english.rfi.fr/europe/20140731-erdogan-defends-islamic-akp-s-pro-business-record-turkey-s-presidential-election>; Yuksel Sezgin, "Erdogan's Presidency: A Risky Gamble?," *Al Jazeera* (03/08/2014), <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/08/erdogan-presidency-risky-gamble-20148284822695561.html>; Halil M. Karaveli, "Reverting to His Roots: Erdoğan sees Himself as the 'Imam' of Turkey, But is the AKP' New-Old Islamism a Recipe for Success?," *Turkey Analyst* (11/06/2012), <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/inside/turkey/2012/120611a.html>. Moreover, as Osman Bahadır Dinçer said, the tendency of Turkish political Islamist to assume that they possess all the power was also a dynamic that was favoured by a changing and more powerful AKP, thus leading to more ideologically driven behaviour. USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

better relationship with the region, but it was the AKP elite ideology that saw Turkey's relations with Israel and Arab as mutually exclusive, at least to some extent.

In that sense, external developments, such as the Gaza war and the "Gaza flotilla" incident were filtered by the AKP elite ideology and contributed to the worsening Turkish-Israeli relations. At the same time, for ideological and material reasons (with material being primary and ideological secondary), Turkey's relations with Iran (and Syria) improved to a great extent with Turkey supporting the controversial election of Ahmadinejad in 2009 and later, in 2010, the Iranian nuclear programme at the United Nations. In turn, Israel's perceptions of the Turkey-Iran relationship had a negative impact on Turkey-Israel relations but on the other hand Turkey's domestic politics played its own role, as elaborated in the next intervening variable.

2nd Intervening Variable: Domestic Interest Groups

The correlation between Turkish-Iranian and Turkish-Israeli relations in the 2000s is also hard to identify in the policies of the different domestic interest groups. Their views of the AKP's policies towards Israel and Iran could be helpful in this respect while insights on their stance towards Israel and Iran from previous case studies analysed can support the examination of Iran's role in Turkey's Israel policy.

Evidence suggests so far that economic factors are very important in TFP, yet largely dependent on changes in the independent variables. As such,

business elites have their own place in the equation of TFP. As elaborated in the analysis of Iran's role in Turkey's Syria policy, business circles – particularly TÜSİAD and MÜSİAD – have had a pragmatic approach towards Turkey's external economic relations although MÜSİAD was keen on the development of such relations especially with Turkey's Muslim neighbourhood.⁵¹¹ The approach of business elites in the case of Israel meant that economic relations mostly improved throughout the 2000s.

While it has been argued that business associations play an important role in shaping TFP preferences,⁵¹² this thesis has also suggested that business associations and other domestic groups had a greater role in the AKP's early years of governance than in more recent years. That is because of the EU's diminished role in TFP and the gradually "louder voice" of a narrow circle of AKP elites in policy-making as the party was growing more authoritarian after 2007.⁵¹³

Regarding the case under examination, one could argue that an increasing communication gap between business and AKP elites is not evident – given Turkey's good economic relations with the two countries. However, this thesis

⁵¹¹ In addition to previously cited sources on MÜSİAD's preferences see also, "MÜSİAD says Turkey must issue long-term bonds," *Today's Zaman* (11/11/2010), http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action;jsessionid=33B9D7B760519E24530FAD3672F32C93?newsId=226882.

⁵¹² Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Dr. Ali Engin Oba. Interview with the author, Ankara, 12 June 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Reşat Arim. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013; academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013.

⁵¹³ Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; Chairman of the Scientific Committee at International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) Dr. İhsan Bal. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

would argue that according to evidence presented so far, along with the growing communication gap also emerged a gap between political and economic relations. This has been at least partly attributed to the growing role of the private sector in foreign economic relations especially in the case of Israel. Contrary to the case of Israel, where diplomatic relations worsened, the preserved good relations with Iran have been supported – not undermined – by ideological factors.

Similar to the changing role of business groups has been the role of opposition political parties.⁵¹⁴ CHP deputy chairman, Loğoğlu, said: “Although we have presented various foreign policy alternatives, the AKP ignored and rejected almost all of our contributions.”⁵¹⁵ This feeling is widespread among the opposition parties as their reactions about Turkey’s Israel stance demonstrated. The CHP also maintains a balance regarding Iran (a “valuable neighbour”) as it stresses its right to have a nuclear programme (for peaceful purposes) as well as its “obligation to be transparent about it.” At the same time the CHP, as a primarily pro-Western party, emphasises Turkey’s place in

⁵¹⁴ In the past, opposition parties in Turkey and particularly CHP, whenever it found itself on the side of the opposition, were relatively more successful in influencing policy outcomes. The weakening of the Kemalist military and bureaucratic establishment and AKP’s empowerment had an impact on this dynamic. On the one hand, CHP was “no longer the party of the state” (Baskın Oran quoted in Sevgi Akarçeşme) and the public support of other opposition parties is too little to pose a serious challenge (electoral or otherwise) to AKP’s governance. See, Sevgi Akarçeşme, “Weak political opposition impedes further political development in Turkey,” *Today’s Zaman*(18/12/2012), http://www.todayszaman.com/national_weak-political-opposition-impedes-further-political-development-in-turkey_301548.html.

⁵¹⁵ CHP Deputy Chairman Osman Faruk Loğoğlu Interview with the author, Ankara, 30 September 2013.

NATO not least because of the protection it provides to Turkey against regional threats – one of them being the possibility of Iranian nuclear weapons.⁵¹⁶

The leader of the nationalist MHP, Devlet Bahçeli, despite his general opposition to the AKP, has supported its pro-Iran policies, saying that they have been “very consistent all along.” At the same time he accused Israel – together with other countries – of supporting the PKK.⁵¹⁷ In the context of the party’s adversity towards Western powers, the MHP related more to Iran and its sovereign rights rather than the policies and interests of (Western) international actors. To be sure, the belief that Israel has supported the Kurds of Iraq in the past as well as the fears that it might be cooperating with the PKK while lobbying in the US for “the cause of Armenians, Kurds, Alevis,” creates insecurities in the MHP and the AKP.⁵¹⁸

As such, the MHP would prefer a closer relationship with Iran rather than with Israel. On the other hand, the pro-Kurdish BDP – as the so called political wing of the PKK – welcomes Israel’s direct or indirect support of the Kurds in Turkey or elsewhere,⁵¹⁹ although more recently the Kurdish BDP and non-BDP politicians, such as Ahmet Türk, argued that countries like Israel and Iran do

⁵¹⁶ Kılıçdaroğlu, "Interview with Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu," 28.

⁵¹⁷ Selim Kuvel, "Bahçeli fires back at protestors who say they'll hang Erdoğan," *Today's Zaman* (16/06/2010), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-213263-bahceli-fires-back-at-protestors-who-say-theyll-hang-erdogan.html>.

⁵¹⁸ Othman Ali, "Possible Consequences of PKK-Israeli Union," *Today's Zaman* (18/09/2011), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-257074-possible-consequences-of-pkk-israeli-unionby-othman-ali.html>.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid. It is also important that Iran has cooperated with Turkey against the PKK as it has its own Kurdish problem which it would not like to see escalating.

not want a resolved Kurdish issue because then Turkey “would be the strongest country in the Middle East and become a model for the region.”⁵²⁰

Overall there is an imbalance in domestic political opposition. A general tendency to support Iran can be identified, especially in MHP and CHP. The CHP also tried to strike a balance between its pro-Westernism and its support for Iran’s rights while it advocates for healthy relations with Israel. Given the reported developing relations between Israel and the PKK, the BDP would be also more inclined to support Israel and adopt a critical stance towards Iran, while the MHP sees Israel as a threat and an anchor of Western interests.

Despite their positions, which one could argue are fairly balanced, political opposition parties throughout the 2000s have not demonstrated particularly strong support for Iran or opposition to Israel – with the notable exception of the crisis over the “Gaza flotilla” incident. Nor did they seek better relations with Iran at the expense of Israel. Moreover, as noted, the influence of political opposition over the AKP governance declined significantly by the end of the 2000s, that is, around the same time Turkey-Iran relations boomed and Turkey-Israel relations deteriorated unprecedentedly.

The changing role of the Kemalist military establishment, as stressed in other cases, is also directly related to the gradually more salient and vocal expressions of the AKP elite ideology. The Kemalist Generals were supporters of strong relations with Israel and turned against the Erbakan government

⁵²⁰ "Iran, Syria, Israel don't want Kurdish solution, says Kurdish MP," *Hürriyet Daily News*(24/01/2013), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/iran-syria-israel-dont-want-kurdish-solution-says-kurdish-mp.aspx?pageID=238&nID=39727&NewsCatID=338>.

(1996-97) which sought better relations with Iran. Yet in the early 2000s they tried to mend fences with Iran for reasons examined previously, mostly related with mutual security threats. Yet the simultaneous deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations and betterment of Turkey-Iran relations at the expense of Turkey's Western orientation would politically or even militarily mobilize the military establishment against the government. As it occurs from the political absence of the military in these developments, it once again becomes evident that its historic role of political intervention belongs to the past, thus rendering the AKP the primary regulator of domestic politics.

Within the framework of the Turkey-Iran-Israel dynamic in question, public opinion mostly played a role due to the anti-American sentiments that had developed after 9/11 and the Iraq war. The public opinion favouring Iran, the threatening perception of the West, as well as the increasingly negative anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic popular feelings, as analysed above, reinforced and legitimised the AKP's stance towards Israel and Iran, not least by indirectly calling for distance from Israel and closer relations with Iran, in opposition to the West. In an age of mass politics the AKP's assertive and ideologically-informed foreign policy is important to be appealing to the majority of the public opinion – even if opposition parties disagree – as that, among other things, secures the AKP's stay in power. This is especially true, and not particularly difficult for the AKP to achieve, given that the AKP's electoral base

is primarily comprised by conservative Turks who maintain favourable attitudes towards the AKP's expressed ideology.⁵²¹

Intervening Variables and the Role of Iran in the AKP's Israel Policy

As established, the independent variables played the primary role in driving Turkey to adopt a more Middle Easternized foreign policy, with the result of having better relations with Iran and Syria, among others, as well as worsening relations with Israel. Notably, the two relationships did not affect each other until the late 2000s. Turkey maintained good diplomatic, political, security and economic relations with both countries for the most part of the decade. As with other instances explored, and as noted in the very beginning, the second election of the AKP (2007) was a turning point which gave rise to a stronger AKP and thus more vocal in its ideological convictions, as well as a weakened military and political opposition. In turn, this led the AKP to limit the inclusion of other actors – like business associations – in foreign policy-making. Thus, by 2010, the ever better relationship between Turkey and Iran, contributed to the former's declining relations with Israel.

AKP ideology played an assistive role (as an intervening filter between the independent and dependent variables) due to favourable predispositions towards Iran and negative predispositions towards Israel, while the perceptions

⁵²¹ Erik R. Tillman, "The AKP's working class support base explains why the Turkish government has managed to retain its popularity during the country's protests," *European Politics and Policy at LSE* (29/05/2014), <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2014/05/29/the-akps-appeal-to-the-working-class-explains-why-the-turkish-government-has-managed-to-retain-its-support-during-the-countrys-protests/>; Etyen Mahcupyan, "Why does the AKP always win?," *Today's Zaman* (03/04/2014), http://www.todayzaman.com/columnists/etyen-mahcupyan_343761-why-does-the-akp-always-win.html.

of the public underpinned and legitimized the AKP's stance. For their part, opposition parties had an overall balanced approach which did not affect the AKP, mainly because of their inability to effectively influence the government's policies. In terms of the business elites, it became evident that – at least in some cases – politics does not need to come first in order for economy to follow. Good and growing economic relations between Turkey and Israel have been a reality despite bad political relations. Moreover, the pragmatism of business circles would not prefer economic relations with one state rather than another, but it would aim at good ties with everyone. All in all, Iran did not have a central or determining role in Turkish-Israeli relations but it did have a part in the deepening of the gap between these two countries.

6.3. Conclusions

This chapter looked at the case of Israel in TFP during the 2002-2011 period. The two sub-case studies focused on the trajectory of Turkish-Israeli deteriorating relations during the 2000s and Iran's role in Turkey's Israel policy. It was again suggested that the security sector is more important than the economic one in Ankara's calculations given that the AKP was immune to domestic pressures with regard to its Israel security policy; it stuck to its own understanding of how Turkey should respond and manage the regional systemic realities. As such, and in agreement to this thesis' initial propositions, it can be also seen that the AKP is the most significant domestic factor as it plays a primary role in filtering external structural realities and changes.

However, the role of business elites must not be neglected as they managed through pressures and their largely autonomous role to maintain their economic relations with Israel despite the deteriorating Turkish-Israeli relations. Moreover, it should be noted that public opinion is at least as important as business elites given that so far in the analysis Turkey has not been seen to follow any policies that go against public opinion. Such examples can be found in the post-2011 period only to prove that public opinion matters.

These observations contribute to existing studies: first, by reaffirming the initial proposition that material and particularly systemic considerations are primary in Turkish foreign policy-making; and second, by identifying which policy sector has been most important in TFP. While these findings may agree with systemic approaches in terms of the material incentives of TFP,⁵²² they also highlight the intervening role of AKP and its elite ideology;⁵²³ which is to say that accurate conclusions cannot be reached by overplaying one of the two approaches. Rather, and as this thesis argues, TFP can be decoded best when the causal relationship between foreign policy drivers is understood. In addition, the fact that the influence of business circles is more often than not limited to the economic sector – which is important nonetheless – clarifies the role of this group and contributes to the debate about the extent to which

⁵²² E.g. Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy," 3-20; Pope, "Pax Ottomana?: The Mixed Success of Turkey's New Foreign Policy," 161-71.

⁵²³ For works that emphasise the ideological incentives of TFP see, for example, Stefanos Constantinides, "Νέο-Οθωμανισμός: Έννοια Κλειδί για την Κατανόηση της Σημερινής Τουρκίας [Neo-Ottomanism: A Key Concept for Understanding Today's Turkey]," in *Νέο-Οθωμανισμός και Ελληνική Ταυτότητα*, ed. Giorgos Karampelias (Athens: Enallaktikes Ekdoseis, 2009), 19-41; Rubin, "Shifting Sides? The Problems of Neo-Ottomanism."; Taspinar, "Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism."

Turkey's overall foreign policy is based on economic interests. Thereby, it also contributes to analyses of Turkish external political and security relations which are overly reliant on economic factors.⁵²⁴

Part III is the next and last part of the thesis. It is broken down into two main chapters and the conclusions. Chapter 7 analyses TFP towards Syria and Israel during the 2011-2013 period while chapter 8 focuses on the final Cross-Case and Cross-Time comparative analyses.

⁵²⁴ Habibi and Walker, "What Is Driving Turkey's Reengagement with the Arab World?."; Kutlay, "Economy as the 'Practical Hand' of 'New Turkish Foreign Policy': A Political Economy Explanation," 67-88.

PART III

So far the analysis has allowed for a systematic and focused examination of TFP. It also provided the opportunity to analyse both the economic and security policies while taking into account ideational factors, like AKP elite ideology, and other domestic factors such as the role of opposition parties, business associations and public opinion. Preliminary conclusions were also drawn about issues such as the primary role of independent variables, the filtering role of ideology and the limited impact of domestic interest groups, apart from the importance of business groups during the AKP's first term, and the significant public opinion support for governmental policies.

The goal has not been to create a list or an abstract synthesis of factors. It has rather been to attribute a certain significance to each factor through each case study. Ultimately, the comparative analysis chapter ties these findings and insights together thereby generating causal chains and a hierarchy of foreign policy drivers that lead to specific foreign policy strategies and foreign policy behaviour, in accordance with the theoretical framework.

What follows in the next chapter (7), is an analysis of the post-“Arab Spring” TFP towards Syria and Israel. This chronological division is based on the methodology set by the theoretical framework and is in accordance to changes to the primary independent variable, that is, the international power changes that came about with the “Arab Spring.” The same systematic way of analysis and variables is followed. As noted, the findings of the three previous chapters together with the findings of the next one are systematically analysed

from a comparative perspective in chapter 8, where patterns and differences in the drivers of TFP towards the Middle East are identified across cases and time. This leads to the establishment of the causal chains that produce TFP behaviour in each case and, by extension, highlight the relationship between different drivers and policy sectors in Turkey's Middle East policy.

7. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Syria and Israel 2011-2013

Following on from the analysis of the AKP's foreign policy towards the Middle East, with specific regard to Syria and Israel, the same phenomenon is looked at and analysed in a different systemic and domestic context. The period analysed in this chapter is the one starting in 2011 (late 2010, to be precise) with the outbreak of the Arab Uprisings (termed, "Arab Spring") and finishing at the end of 2013. The "Arab Spring" brought about systemic geopolitical and power changes which affected Turkey's regional policy, not least because of their impact on its threat perceptions and economic interdependencies.

This external systemic change is also the theoretical and methodological criterion which determines the division of the timeframe, since international power changes are seen as the primary independent variable that affects foreign policy behaviour. The Arab Uprisings and their effects have not finished and their outcome is far from clear or certain. Yet, a specific timeframe had to be set for the facilitation of a systematic analysis of past – rather than ongoing – events.

The logic upon which this chapter is based is the same as in the previous chapter in order to ensure consistency and coherence. The systemic-external level is examined first through three variables which are seen as independent in impacting foreign policy: International power changes, threat perceptions, and economic interdependence. Then, two domestic variables for the cases of Syria and Israel are looked at – i.e. AKP elite ideology, and domestic interest groups –

as intervening between the effects of the system level and TFP behaviour. The analysis focuses on Turkey's security and economic policies towards Syria and Israel in the midst of the Syrian civil war and the further deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations especially after the release of the UN "Palmer" report (2011) on the Gaza flotilla incident.

7.1. Independent Variables and Turkey's "Arab Spring" Foreign Policy

Three external, systemic, developments affected TFP from 2011 onwards, in addition to the challenges of the previous decade: The breakout of the "Arab Spring," the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq which started in 2009 and finished in 2011, as well as the power shifts in the Eastern Mediterranean with the closer cooperation between Israel, Cyprus and Greece. According to the theoretical framework all of these contributed to changing the regional and international power relations and, by extension, to external threat perceptions and economic interdependence. Therefore, all three external developments had an impact on TFP. And though the framework does not allow for a hierarchy in terms of the significance of power related factors, the American withdrawal from Iraq is seen in conjunction with the Arab Uprisings as the primary systemic factors, mainly drawing upon the significance it has been given to these events in existing literature as laid out below.

The completion of the American withdrawal from Iraq was a result of changes in the international system that the very invasion of Iraq in 2003 brought about, namely the weakening of US influence, while it had its own

ramifications for the region. On the other hand, the “Arab Spring” which former FM Ahmet Davutoğlu named as the third “geopolitical earthquake” of the post-Cold War era,⁵²⁵ expressed a bottom-up challenge to the region; it had significant geopolitical effects, and reflected the realities of a shifting international system as well. Lastly, the discovery of large Israeli and Cypriot reserves of natural gas, as well as the cooperation between these countries and Greece because of that, provided a dynamic of increased relative power to each one of them separately and to all of them as a whole – i.e. as a strategic triangle.

International and Regional Power Changes

As a result of the war in Iraq, 2003 (and Afghanistan, 2001), US foreign policy and world influence followed a declining trajectory. In turn, its military withdrawal from the country essentially left a massive power vacuum which competing regional powers, like Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia, struggled to fill – Iran made the most of the advances.⁵²⁶ This gave rise to an indirect confrontation of ideological and sectarian character between those powers, namely, a Sunni-Shia rivalry.⁵²⁷ This tendency was further exacerbated by the “Arab Spring,” since moderate Islamist movements and political parties were empowered by the uprisings and their outcomes.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁵ Davutoğlu, "Address by Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey at the 2nd Annual Session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Istanbul".

⁵²⁶ Ayoob, "The Arab Spring," 89-90. Also, Turkish academic no. 2. Conversation with the author, Istanbul, 13 October 2012.

⁵²⁷ CHP Parliamentary Assistant Kivanç Özcan. Interview with the author, Ankara, 24 September 2013.

⁵²⁸ Katerina Dalacoura, "The Arab Uprisings Two Years On: Ideology, Sectarianism and the Changing Balance of Power in the Middle East," *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 1 (2013): 83.

Important powers like Turkey and Iran have been both favoured and challenged by this development which ultimately affected the regional balance of power. Iran read the uprisings as the re-Islamisation of the region and tried to capitalize on their ideological impetus for geopolitical benefits and the exportation of its own theocratic revolution. Turkey saw the rise of Sunni pro-Islamic political parties, which were close to its own image, and imagined greater cooperation, better regional relations and potentially even more influence over the new governments through the promotion of its own model of democracy and political system.⁵²⁹

In this instance, this thesis would agree with Mohammed Ayoob that, the regional balance of power has been concentrated in the Turkish and Iranian centres primarily, although Turkey's "sphere of interest" is mostly in the Eastern Mediterranean and Iran's in the Gulf.⁵³⁰ Saudi Arabia and Israel remain important but with less influence while Egypt, the most important Arab state, is on the rise,⁵³¹ albeit with significant domestic problems that undermine its overall relative international power.⁵³²

⁵²⁹ Ayoob, "The Arab Spring," 91-93. For a discussion about the Turkish Model, see, Ömer Taşpınar, "The Turkish Model and its Applicability," in *Turkey and the Arab Spring: Implications for Turkish Foreign Policy From a Transatlantic Perspective*, ed. Natalie Tocci, et al. (Washington: The German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2011), 9-13.

⁵³⁰ Ayoob, "The Arab Spring," 94.

⁵³¹ Saudi Arabia has also had an important regional role which is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis. Moreover, it is important that Hamas, formerly a close ally of the Iran-Syria axis, changed its position and left Syria, in 2012, for Egypt and Qatar, due to the unrest in the country, thus contributing to the changing regional power relations. In this sense there is both a pragmatic and ideological element in its decision since the change came after the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. It is worth mentioning that Hamas still enjoys Iranian support and that its future outlook might largely depend on the relations between Egypt and Iran. "Hamas political leaders leave Syria for Egypt and Qatar," *BBC*(28/02/2012), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17192278>; Dalacoura, "The Arab

The civil war in Syria, as a product of the “Arab Spring,” played an important role in this power shift since Syria was part of the Turkey-Syria-Iran geopolitical triangle. It thus brought Turkish and Iranian interests at odds, at least to some extent, for Turkey followed a largely pro-Western policy towards the Syrian civil war while Iran maintained an anti-Western stance, supported by Russia and China.⁵³³

It is argued here that, this last point also shows how global dynamics manifest at the regional level. The interrelationship between the regional and global level in balance-of-power or balance-of-threat terms was highlighted by Walt; observation that this thesis subscribes to. He specifically showed how the balancing of power and threats is still a major concern among states of the Middle East. At the same time he argued that regional states used foreign help – notably by the superpowers of the system – to deal with regional problems. Moreover, Walt made the case that great powers see regional issues through the lens of their own rivalry with other great powers (see the example of Cold War and US vs. USSR in the Middle East).⁵³⁴ Thus the regional and global levels are interconnected.

Uprisings Two Years On: Ideology, Sectarianism and the Changing Balance of Power in the Middle East," 86.

⁵³² Marwa Hussein, "Egypt's Next Government Faces Major Economic Challenges," *Ahram Online* (04/07/2013), <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/3/12/75742/Business/Economy/Egypt-next-government-faces-major-economic-challe.aspx>.

⁵³³ Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013; Ambassador (ret.) Dr. Ali Engin Oba. Interview with the author, Ankara, 12 June 2013; USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; Academic Dr. Ahmet Sözen. Interview with the author, Famagusta, Cyprus, 26 December 2013. See also, Kabalan, "Syria-Turkish Relations," 35-36.

⁵³⁴ Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*: 269-73.

In this case, the US retreat from the Middle East, with the withdrawal from Iraq, the US taking the back seat in the Libya operations of NATO, and the inability to adopt a decisive approach to the Syrian crisis, arguably present a gradual decline in the US ability to exert its power globally, like in the past, as well as the rise of new actors⁵³⁵ on an inter-regional or global scale (e.g. Russia and China).⁵³⁶

Fareed Zakaria's take on this dynamic is that rising powers should no longer be seen as having to choose between integrating into or rejecting the Western order. On the contrary, he argues, rising powers today seem to be "entering the Western order but doing so on their own terms – thus reshaping the system itself."⁵³⁷ Although Zakaria refers mostly to greater powers like the BRICS⁵³⁸ countries, Turkey has its own place in this framework as a rising

⁵³⁵ Within this framework one could talk about other actors as well, such as the Arab League or the Gulf Cooperation Council, which have indeed acquired some prominence in the midst of the Arab Uprisings. Specifically, the Arab League played a role when it asked the United Nations Security Council to impose a no-fly zone over Libya, or when it openly – yet symbolically – opposed Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria by handing Syria's seat in the League to the Syrian rebels. However, despite their improved role, this thesis does not see these actors as having a substantial impact on regional or international politics and, therefore, they are not taken into account when looking at Turkish foreign policy towards Syria and Israel. The thesis is more concerned with inter-state relations, not the relations within organizations or between states and organizations. See for example, Ethan Bronner and David E. Sanger, "Arab League Endorses No-Flight Zone Over Libya," *The New York Times*(12/03/2011), http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/13/world/middleeast/13libya.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0; "Arab League hands Syrian seat to rebels," *CBCNews*(24/03/2013), <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/arab-league-hands-syrian-seat-to-rebels-1.1389660>.

⁵³⁶ Various scholars have made similar cases for the decentralization and regionalisation of the international system which is accompanied by the rise of regional powers and the increasing need to focus on the regional level. See, Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers*; Şaban Kardaş, "Turkey: A Regional Power Facing a Changing International System," *Turkish Studies* 14, no. 4 (2013): 637-60.

⁵³⁷ Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World and the Rise of the Rest* (London: Penguin Books, 2011, Release 2.0). 38.

⁵³⁸ BRICS: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa.

regional power with supra-regional potential.⁵³⁹ To be sure, the argument that US international power is declining is neither definitively proven nor easily accepted, not least because US power cannot be defined or debated in such a narrow way; there is a great debate about that and the changing nature of the international system which includes factors such as the economy, security, as well as cultural and hegemonic influence.⁵⁴⁰

For example Vali Nasr, formerly a Senior Adviser to US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke under Obama, wrote that he does not believe that the US is declining. However he does note the failure of the US to understand global geopolitical changes, especially the rise of China and the fact that their competition will be played out not only in the Pacific but in the Middle East as well.⁵⁴¹ In this context, Nasr argues that Turkey's re-engagement with the Middle East was welcomed in Washington and that the US "should thank Europe for that." Yet at the same time he says that "There is still reason to doubt that Turkey could or would serve as anchor for American policy;" a fact which demonstrates Turkey's gradual tendency towards more autonomy.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ Gökhan Bacık makes a similar argument. See, Gökhan Bacık, "Turkey and the BRICS: Can Turkey Join BRICS?," *Turkish Studies* 15, no. 4 (2013): 758-73.

⁵⁴⁰ The thesis does not deal with the complexity of the debate about power here. It is more interested in the material aspect of power and its projection. For more on this debate see, Gideon Rachman, *Zero-Sum Future: American Power in an Age of Anxiety* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011); Thomas L. Friedman and Michael Mandelbaum, *That Used to Be Us: How America Fell Behind in the World it Invented and How We Can Come Back* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011); Edward Luce, *Time to Start Thinking: America in the Age of Descent* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2012); Robert J. Lieber, *Power and Willpower in the American Future* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Barry Buzan, "A World Order Without Superpowers: Decentred Globalism," *International Relations* 25, no. 1 (2011); Layne, "The Unipolar Illusion: Why New Great Powers Will Rise."

⁵⁴¹ Vali Nasr, *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat* (New York: Doubleday, 2013). 251, 3.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 196-98.

Taking the above into account, it can be seen how the changes in the global balance of power increased the importance of the regional level and the regional balance of power, thus emphasising the changing role of regional actors, like Turkey, both for greater powers and the region itself. At the same time, the empowerment of such actors and their need to address their problems by themselves in absence of outside support or influence can also be seen. As such, the power changes on both the regional and the international levels have influenced the conduct of TFP not least through their impact on the country's international threat perceptions and economic interdependencies, as observed below.

External Threat Perceptions

The implications of the systemic changes after 2011, as described above, for Turkey's international threat perceptions were numerous. Turkish-Syrian relations moved again from amity to enmity partly due to the fact that Syria,⁵⁴³ as well as the role of its civil war in the exacerbation of the Kurdish issue, was seen as a security threat. Turkey's efforts to maintain a pro-democracy image also played a role in this change; in the words of Davutoğlu: "As the region was undergoing such a political earthquake, we aspired to position ourselves on the right side of the history and decided to make our humble contribution to this epic democratic struggle."⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴³ Hinnebusch, "The Study of Turkey-Syria Relations," 2-3.

⁵⁴⁴ Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring," 8.

At the same time, Tehran no longer held the position of Turkey's close ally since Ankara's Syria policy had become worrying for Iran. Yet the Kurdish issue remains central in the evolution of Turkey's stance. As the crisis in Syria escalated, the possibilities for the dismemberment of the country increased and the creation of a Syrian Kurdistan had gradually become far from implausible.⁵⁴⁵ This in turn created fears in Turkey that the PKK would expand its territories, on the one hand, and that Turkey's Kurdish minority would be encouraged to pursue similar demands for autonomy, on the other.⁵⁴⁶ From that perspective, there emerged the need to manage the Syrian crisis, topple the Bashar al-Assad regime as well as seek support from the West.

In Iraq, a Sunni-Shia domestic confrontation, in 2012, led to a deterioration in the relations between Turkey and Iraq⁵⁴⁷ – the government of which was predominantly Shia and backed by Iran. This development, coupled with allegations about Iran-Iraq cooperation to smuggle weapons and personnel into Syria, increased Turkey's threat perceptions towards Iraq and Iran.⁵⁴⁸ Contrary

⁵⁴⁵ The declaration of an autonomous government in one of the three cantons of Syrian Kurdistan came in early 2014 and was deemed by many as a game changer and a significant systemic development for the region. See, Namo Abdulla, "The Rise of Syria's Kurds," *Al Jazeera*(23/01/2014), <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/01/rise-syria-kurds-201412353941189707.html>.

⁵⁴⁶ Othman Ali, "Western Kurdish autonomous region in Syria: the PKK's last card," *Today's Zaman* (30/06/2012), http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=288130.

⁵⁴⁷ Sinem Cengiz, "Hashemi seeks Turkish support against Maliki's Shiite dominance in Iraq," *Today's Zaman* (10/04/2012), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-277033-hashemi-seeks-turkish-support-against-malikis-shiite-dominance-in-iraq.html>; "Turkey refuses to extradite Iraqi Vice-President Tariq al-Hashemi," *BBC* (09/05/2012), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18009408>.

[illegible]

to Ankara-Baghdad relations, Turkey's relations with the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) of Northern Iraq (or Kurdistan) improved significantly thus alleviating the Iraqi Kurdish threat that influenced much of Turkey's Middle East policies in the early 2000s.⁵⁴⁹ This also meant that Ankara developed a more positive outlook regarding the Kurds abroad as well as the US, which Turkey blamed for the instability in Iraq.

Ankara's change of heart was primarily a product of regional changes. In the face of broken relations with Syria, increasingly problematic relations with Iran and a crisis between Baghdad and Ankara, left Turkey looking for a regional pole of stability which could also respond to the country's energy and economic needs.⁵⁵⁰ Iraqi Kurdistan was that pole and its cooperation with Turkey grew to include many sectors with energy exports to Turkey being the most important.⁵⁵¹ Although Iraq is beyond the scope of this analysis, it should be also noted that Turkey's approach to the Kurds of Iraq was favoured by electoral considerations and by its ideology which, as mentioned before, transcends national identities and therefore perceives Kurds as less threatening to Turkey's national homogeneity than in the past; especially in light of the

⁵⁴⁹ The rift that had developed between Ankara and Baghdad as well as between Baghdad and Erbil (Kurdistan), mainly over the management of Kurdistan's oil, was instrumental in this rapprochement. See, Çağaptay and Evans, "Turkey's Changing Relations with Iraq: Kurdistan Up, Baghdad Down." Also, academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013.

⁵⁵⁰ Gallia Lindenstrauss and Furkan Aksoy, "Turkey and Northern Iraq: Tightening Relations in a Volatile Environment," *Strategic Assessment* 15, no. 3 (2012): 49-58.

⁵⁵¹ Dorian Jones, "Turkey, Iraqi Kurdistan Seal 50-Year Energy Deal," *Voice of America*(05/06/2014), <http://www.voanews.com/content/turkey-iraqi-kurdistan-seal-50-year-energy-deal/1930721.html>.

economic, energy and security benefits that would occur from a Turkey-Kurdistan cooperation.⁵⁵²

As regards Israel, Turkey adopted an even more hostile stance than during the 2010 “Mavi Marmara” crisis, when the results of the Palmer report on the Gaza flotilla incident favoured Israel, at least in Ankara’s opinion.⁵⁵³ It was then that Turkey further downgraded its diplomatic and military ties with Israel, expelled the Israeli ambassador as well as threatened with sanctions and increasing naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean.⁵⁵⁴ Later, in 2012, the tension between the two countries was further exacerbated when a Turkish

⁵⁵² See also, Nikos Moudouros, "Initiatives for Solving the Kurdish Question: A Contradiction or 'an Ideological Consistency' of AKP," *Centre for Policy and Research on Turkey (ResearchTurkey)* 2, no. 7 (September, 2013); "Erdogan committed to solving Kurd crisis through 'Islam'," *Arab News*(22/03/2013), <http://www.arabnews.com/news/445581>. Turkey's unprecedented openness to Iraq's Kurds under the AKP became evident once more in a public encounter between Turkish PM Erdoğan and Kurdistan President Masoud Barzani in late 2013 in Turkey's Kurdish-dominated district Diyarbakir, when Erdoğan became the first leader in Turkey's history to utter the word “Kurdistan”. To be sure, Erdoğan's approach did not entail support for the autonomy of the Kurds in Turkey or elsewhere (i.e. Kurdistan, Syria, Iran) as Barzani himself had at the time criticized the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party for seeking the establishment of an “autonomous administration” in Syria. It has, however, argued widely that Turkey's support for Iraqi Kurdistan is also part of the AKP's peace process with Turkey's Kurds; a process which would also bring the Kurdish opposition closer to the government and also support its efforts for a new constitution in the Grand National Assembly. See, Cengiz Çandar, "Erdogan-Barzani 'Diyarbakir encounter' milestone," *Al-Monitor* (20/11/2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/erdogan-barzani-kurdistan-diyarbakir-political-decision.html#>; Michael M. Gunter, "Turkey: The Politics of a New Democratic Constitution," *Middle East Policy* XIX, no. 2 (2012): 123-24; Kadri Gursel, "Erdogan Seeks Kurdish Allies for New Turkish Constitution," *Al-Monitor* (13/02/2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ar/originals/2013/02/kurds-turkish-constitution-akp-chp-mhp-factions.html#ixzz3DkU5Sq6K>; Yerevan Saeed, "Kurdish Question Litmus Test for Turkey's New Government, Experts Say," *Rudaw* (08/09/2014), <http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/turkey/08092014>.

⁵⁵³ Geoffrey Palmer et al., "Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Inquiry on the 31 May 2010 Flotilla Incident " (United Nations, 2011).

⁵⁵⁴ Today's Zaman, "PM: Turkey to impose more sanctions on Israel, boost presence in east Med," (2011), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-255903-pm-turkey-to-impose-more-sanctions-on-israel-boost-presence-in-east-med.html>; Arsu, "Amid Tensions With Israel, Turkey Threatens Increased Naval Presence."

court indicted four Israeli military leaders for their involvement in the "Gaza flotilla" raid.⁵⁵⁵

As such, the already existing problems of Turkey and Israel worsened amidst the greater regional instability. In the meanwhile, Israel after the 2010 crisis with Turkey initiated closer diplomatic, energy and military cooperation (some called it an "axis")⁵⁵⁶ with Cyprus and Greece which was based on their shared energy interests. This had a salient impact on the balance of power since Greece, Cyprus and Israel were forming a strategic triangle that was also balancing against a perceived mutual threat to their efforts to exploit their energy resources. In this sense, Israel had also become a threat to Turkey and its interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Of course, this reason was not primary in the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations, but it contributed to the existing problematique which, as explained, stemmed mainly from systemic realities such as incompatible geopolitical goals, on the one hand, and ideological differences, on the other, and, by extension, mistrust.⁵⁵⁷

⁵⁵⁵ Isabel Kershner, "Turkish Court Indicts 4 Israeli Military Leaders," *The New York Times* (28/05/2012), http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/middleeast/turkish-court-indicts-4-israeli-military-leaders.html?_r=0.

⁵⁵⁶ Daniela Huber and Nathalie Tocci, "Behind the Scenes of the Turkish-Israeli Breakthrough," *Istituto Affari Internazionali IAI Working Papers*, no. 1315 (2013): 7.

⁵⁵⁷ President of Strategy International Dr. Marios Efthymiopoulos. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 26 January 2013; academic Dr. Louis Fishman. Skype interview with the author, 09 January 2014; Academic Dr. Ahmet Sözen. Interview with the author, Famagusta, Cyprus, 26 December 2013. See, Berna Uzun, "Turkish-Israeli Relations in the Shadow of AKP Populism", *Tel Aviv Notes* (24/12/2009), http://www.tau.ac.il/dayancenter/Turkish-Israeli_%20relations.pdf; Lale Kemal, "Turkish-Israeli Rift and US arms Trade," *Al Arabiya* (17/03/2011), <http://english.alarabiya.net/views/2011/03/17/141948.html>; Lale Kemal, "Turkish-Israeli Mistrust Deepens," *Today's Zaman* (25/03/2011), <http://www.todayzaman.com/newsDetail.action;jsessionid=+JO70z5qqvxUwf-IHl2m6MA8?newsId=238223&columnistId=0>; Yigal Schleifer, "Turkey: Two Years After Flotilla Incident, Relations with Israel Still Sinking," *EurasiaNet.org* (31/03/2012),

As noted in the previous chapter, the “Arab Spring” should have brought Turkey and Israel closer together as it did with Turkey and the US. One could argue that they should have balanced against their common threats in the “new” Middle East and specifically Syria – the Syrian threat was largely what led to the formation of their alliance in 1996. However, the complexity of TFP and the regional geopolitics made things more complicated. In addition to the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean, as far as the system level is concerned, two factors could explain why Turkey became more confrontational towards Israel. Firstly, the changes taking place in the Arab world and Turkey’s need to maintain a pro-Palestinian and, therefore, pro-Arab image. Secondly, Turkey’s worsening relations with Iran after the breakout of the Syrian crisis and the fact that Turkey did not want to challenge them any further.⁵⁵⁸

International Economic Interdependence

During the “Arab Spring,” not only did the insecurities of the post-Iraq war period return in Turkey but also its whole foreign policy doctrine seemed to be on the verge of collapse, mainly because there was uncertainty about what would follow the transition periods in the countries that experienced the

<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65477>; Melkulangara K. Bhadrakumar, "Israel Catches Turkey in Two Minds," *Asia Times* (27/07/2012), http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/NG27Ak01.html.

⁵⁵⁸ As noted repeatedly, it occurs both from the literature and the interviews that Turkish-Iranian relations were largely based on Turkey’s rapprochement with Syria while they were partly favoured by the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations. In that sense, a significant improvement in Turkish-Israeli relations could have had a negative impact on Turkish-Iranian relations. Given Turkey’s heavy dependency on Iranian exports (especially oil and natural gas), its insecurities about how Iran could fuel the Kurdish problem, should the two countries find themselves in friction, as well as the hostility between Iran and Israel, it is easy to comprehend why Ankara would want to keep a relative distance from Israel.

revolts; countries with which Turkey under the AKP had developed very good economic and diplomatic relations. In addition to the analysed booming economic relations of Turkey with Syria and Iran, Turkey's overall exports to the Middle East (the Levant and the Gulf) increased from 4.8 billion USD in 2003 to 38.6 billion USD in 2012 while the volume of its regional bilateral trade went from 9.5 billion USD in 2003 to 65 billion USD in 2012 – there is a similar trend in the country's imports from the region.⁵⁵⁹

In a nutshell, it is clear that both insecurities and economic relations affected Turkey's policy towards the region both prior and after the "Arab Spring." Turkey's pragmatism could be seen in its initial hesitation to immediately cut off highly beneficial ties such as its relations with Syria and Libya. Yet once Turkey felt compelled to take the side of the protesters and support change, mainly due to security concerns such as the Kurdish issue as well as because it wanted to maintain its positive image vis-à-vis the Arab world, it decided to take the risk; its threat perceptions changed and then its economic interdependencies had to be reconfigured.

In Libya for example, where Turkey initially opposed a no-fly zone and a NATO intervention, more than 25,000 Turkish workers were employed, tens of billions of dollars were invested in projects, and the bilateral trade between the two countries almost reached 2.4 billion USD in 2010.⁵⁶⁰ With the outbreak of

⁵⁵⁹ "Middle East Regional Information," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Economy* (July, 2013), <http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions®ion=4>.

⁵⁶⁰ "Turkey's Opposition to Military Intervention in Libya," in *Terrorism Monitor* (The Jamestown Foundation, March 17, 2011), 2; Turkish Republic, "Turkey-Libya Economic and Trade Relations," (2011), http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-commercial-and-economic-relations-with-libya.en.mfa.

the Libyan civil war Turkey's exports to the country went from 1.9 million USD in 2010 to 747, 000 USD in 2011 and increased to 2.14 million USD in 2012.⁵⁶¹ It is worth remembering that after the end of the revolts in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, Turkey granted, among other things, financial help to these countries in the form of loans: 250 million USD to Libya, one billion USD to Egypt, and 500 million USD to Tunisia (one hundred million USD of which was given in the form of donation).⁵⁶² Thereby Turkey got back on track with its regional economic relations and acquired the advantageous role of the political advisor to those countries.

Importantly, even before providing loans and financial help, Ankara tried to gain indirect influence into these countries through multileveled social and political processes. In Kardaş's words,

Turkish leaders, officials, academics, or representatives from NGOs or think-tanks have been frequently touring those countries, and at the same time, many delegations from the Arab world have been visiting Turkey. President Abdullah Gül's visit soon after Mubarak's fall and Erdoğan's Arab Spring tour, on one hand, and Turkey's hosting of the leaders of the Egyptian youth movement, on the other, are illustrative examples of this multi-level interaction.

⁵⁶¹ Data gathered from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr>.

⁵⁶² ""New Tunisia" expects Turkish investments," *Anadolu Agency*(28/12/2012), <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/headline/115135--new-tunisia-to-open-new-horizons-for-new-investments-of-turkish-brethren>; "Egypt signs \$1 billion Turkish loan deal," *Reuters* (20/09/2012), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/30/us-egypt-turkey-loan-idUSBRE88T0G920120930>; "Eximbank to extend \$750 mln in loans to Tunisia, Libya," *Today's Zaman* (24/01/2012), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-269465-eximbank-to-extend-750-mln-in-loans-to-tunisia-libya.html>.

Moreover, Kardaş notes, "What is clear in this interaction is the mutual interest in sharing and learning the Turkish, or AK Party, experience. Almost no week goes by without a conference or workshop on the subject, either in Istanbul, Ankara, Cairo, or Tunis."⁵⁶³ This shows Turkey's efforts not only to re-establish good relations with the new regimes, but to also acquire a model or guide role for these countries.

In terms of the Syrian civil war, Turkey's initial cautious stance was not only influenced by the fragile balance of power between Turkey and Iran or the Kurdish threat. Because their economic relations up to 2011 were excellent, Turkey knew that their disruption would cost too much. That proved to be the case. Notably, from January to December of 2011, the year that the civil war broke out, Turkey's exports to Syria dropped from 108 to around 72 thousand USD. Indicative is also the fact that Turkey's exports to Syria dropped from 1.8 million USD in 2010 to 898 thousand USD in 2013.⁵⁶⁴ It is important that in the midst of the economic and security instability of the "Arab Spring," Turkey increased its exports to the EU from 52 million USD in 2010 to 59 million USD in 2012. The same increase was noticed in Turkey's exports to North American countries, from 4 million USD in 2010 to 6 million USD in 2012.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶³ Şaban Kardaş, "Turkey and the Arab Spring: Coming to Terms with Democracy Promotion?," *The German Marshall Fund of the United States Policy Brief*(2011): 3-4. Dr. Louis Fishman also made that point with specific regard to Egypt. Academic Dr. Louis Fishman. Phone interview with the author, 09 January 2014 Also see, Azeem Ibrahim, "The Turkey Model: Does Turkey Offer a Model for Tunisia and Egypt?," *Institute for Social Policy and Understanding* (April, 2013); Oğuzhan Göksel, "Perceptions of the Turkish Model in Post-Revolutionary Tunisia," *Turkish Studies* (2014).

⁵⁶⁴ Data gathered from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr>.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

This shows a trend, at least in Turkey's foreign economic orientation, which is characterised by a "return" to the West and echoes Bahadır Kaleağası of TÜSIAD who said that Turkey's economic engagement of the Middle East was brief for it was unsustainable due to the political and social turmoil of the "Arab Spring."⁵⁶⁶ To be sure, the general picture of Turkey's regional economic relations has also been positive but, admittedly, the Middle East was of high risk for economic transactions and investments after 2011.

In this instance, Turkey's turn to the West at least in terms of its economic interdependencies, reflects the impact of the systemic changes of the "Arab Spring" which strained Ankara's relationships with its immediate neighbourhood, as well as demonstrate a pragmatic foreign policy approach as opposed to a dogmatic ideological one. As such it can be argued that although the AKP elite ideology was important in filtering the systemic changes of the 2000s and leading to closer relations with the Arab world, it did not hesitate to return – at least partly – to better economic relations with the West in the midst of regional problems. This conclusion contradicts other works that argue for a purely ideological TFP, or a fully regionalised TFP in realist terms.⁵⁶⁷ Yet it does not confirm other works that argue for Turkey's everlasting – if partial – commitment to the West,⁵⁶⁸ as it seems that, at least in economic terms,

⁵⁶⁶ International Coordinator and EU Representative, TÜSIAD, Brussels Branch, Dr. Bahadır Kaleağası. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013.

⁵⁶⁷ See for example, Cornell, "What Drives Turkish Foreign Policy?."; Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey's Foreign Policy."

⁵⁶⁸ Grigoriadis, *Trials of Europeanization*; Grigoriadis, "The Davutoğlu Doctrine and Turkish Foreign Policy."; Aras, "Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy."

Turkey is rather opportunistic and this seems to be mainly because of the largely independent role of business interests.

Independent Variables and the AKP's Middle East Foreign Policy

As repeatedly underlined thus far, the system level variables in question, which relate to power changes, threat perceptions, and economic interdependency, have an independent impact on TFP behaviour. Moreover, the variable that refers to international power changes is primary and, as seen, holds the main role in affecting TFP through its impact on the other independent variables. Within this framework it has been seen how changes in the relative international power of global and regional actors have affected the balance of power and, in turn, Turkish security threat perceptions and economic interdependencies. This led Turkey to a particular foreign policy behaviour that is characterised by two main, and at times contradicting, trends: An effort to rebuild its security, economic and diplomatic relations with the region; and, a policy of gradual and partial “return” to the West. In terms of the latter, apart from the economic evidence already provided, there is also the example of Turkey’s installation of a NATO anti-ballistic warning radar system in its territories, early in 2012, which upset Iran as well as Russia.⁵⁶⁹

Despite this pro-Western attitude, Turkey continued to pursue good relations with the region and other actors. Somewhat paradoxically, Turkish-

⁵⁶⁹ The decision was taken in 2010 which also indicates that ties with the West and specifically NATO were still favoured over regional issues (e.g. ties with Iran) at least in certain policy sectors such as defence. Serkan Demirtaş, "NATO radar system in Turkey up, running," *Hürriyet Daily News*(14/01/2012), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/nato-radar-system-in-turkey-up-running.aspx?pageID=238&nID=11474&NewsCatID=338>.

Israeli relations remained in a bad state apart from the economic aspect, whilst PM Erdoğan threatened that Turkey would choose to enter the Shanghai Cooperation Council – a non-Western organization – instead of the EU.⁵⁷⁰ Thus, it can be suggested that Turkey, faced with a host of insecurities and threats, found itself having to rely more on its traditional Western partners, not least because it realised its limited capabilities.⁵⁷¹ Although some of these changes in TFP after the breakout of the “Arab Spring” could be explained, some others remain contradictory. To the end of explaining these contradictions with regard to the region, more specifically Israel and Syria and, by implication, Turkey-West (i.e. the US and EU) relations, the next point of analysis is the role of AKP elite ideology and domestic interest groups as intervening variables to external pressures and developments.

⁵⁷⁰ "Erdoğan: Turkey considers Shanghai organization an alternative to EU," *Today's Zaman* (25/01/2013), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-305166-erdogan-turkey-considers-shanghai-organization-an-alternative-to-eu.html>. Even worse, Ankara, in 2013, also decided to cooperate with China for the development of an anti-missile system that would also be incompatible with similar NATO systems. Serkan Demirtas, "US further presses Turkey over Chinese missile bid," *Hürriyet Daily News* (20/12/2013), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-further-presses-turkey-over-chinese-missile-bid.aspx?pageID=238&nid=59868>.

⁵⁷¹ Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; Chairman of the Scientific Committee at International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) Dr. İhsan Bal. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013. See also, Osman Bahadır Dinçer and Mustafa Kutlay, *Turkey's Power Capacity in the Middle East. Limits of the Possible: An Empirical Analysis* (Ankara: USAK, June, 2012). e.g. 25.

7.2. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Syria and Intervening Variables

Here, the examination of AKP elite ideology and domestic interest groups vis-à-vis the case of Syria focuses on the way in which domestic dynamics filtered the geopolitical changes of the “Arab Spring,” particularly the Syrian civil war, and resulted in Turkey’s change of stance towards Syria. As well, the intervening variables shed light on what prevented Turkey from entering a war with Syria. The variable of ideology is looked at first and then the domestic interest groups. In this case it is seen how ideology – that is, the particular way in which the AKP elites see and respond to external, systemic, developments – became relatively marginalized by more pragmatic considerations as expressed by domestic interest groups.

AKP Elite Ideology

In terms of the geopolitically crucial case of the Syrian crisis the FM, Ahmet Davutoğlu, stated in 2011: “We hope that a military intervention will never be necessary... However, the Syrian regime has to find a way of making peace with its own people to eliminate this option. If the oppression continues, Turkey is ready for any scenario.”⁵⁷² Later, in 2012, when the crisis escalated significantly, he said that “A new Middle East is emerging and we will

⁵⁷² “Turkey ready for ‘any scenario’ in Syria,” *Al Jazeera* (29/11/2011), <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/11/20111129134450458118.html>.

continue to lead this. Turkey will pioneer this order of peace... The 74 million Turkish people are with the Syrian people and will continue to be."⁵⁷³

Generally, after the summer of 2011, when Turkey called on Assad to step down, Ankara stepped up its efforts for regime change and the internationalisation of the crisis; that is, the involvement of other actors in the management of the Syrian civil war.⁵⁷⁴ It is clear that Ankara sided with the Western powers on Syria and that it gradually changed its rhetoric. However AKP elites, just like FM Davutoğlu, made a clear distinction between the regime and the Syrian people.⁵⁷⁵ At the same time, according to Davutoğlu's sayings, it was also clear that Turkey wanted to maintain the image of the

⁵⁷³ "FM Defends Syria Policy, Says Turkey to Lead 'Wave of Change' in Mideast," *Today's Zaman* (26/04/2012), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-278650-fm-defends-syria-policy-says-turkey-to-lead-wave-of-change-in-mideast.html>.

⁵⁷⁴ Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013. Also, Marc Champion, "Turkey Threatens Syria with Sanctions," *The Wall Street Journal* (25/11/2011), <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052970204630904577059813146005898>; Richard Spencer, "Syria: Turkey threatens to invoke Nato's self-defence article," *The Telegraph* (13/04/2012), <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/9200822/Syria-Turkey-threatens-to-invoke-Natos-self-defence-article.html>; Simon Tisdall, "Turkey calls on major powers to intervene in Syria," *The Guardian* (19/10/2012), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/19/turkey-britain-us-intervene-syria>.

⁵⁷⁵ "Foreign Minister Davutoğlu 'A brighter future is awaiting the Syrian people. Turkey stands with them in this journey'," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (22/01/2013), http://www.mfa.gov.tr/foreign-minister-davutoglu-_a-brighter-future-is-awaiting-the-syrian-people_-turkey-stands-with-them-in-this-journey.en.mfa; "Foreign Minister Davutoğlu 'We will stand by the Syrian people until they live with honor in all around Syria'," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (09/07/2013), <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/foreign-minister-davutoglu-we-will-stand-by-the-syrian-people-until-they-live-with-honor-in-all-around-syria.en.mfa>; "Turkish FM Davutoğlu chants slogan in Arabic with Syrian refugees," *Hürriyet Daily News* (11/07/2013), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-fm-davutoglu-chants-slogan-in-arabic-with-syrian-refugees.aspx?pageID=238&nID=50495&NewsCatID=338>; "Foreign Minister Davutoğlu 'Turkey, as always, stands by the people of Syria'," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (24/08/2013), http://www.mfa.gov.tr/foreign-minister-davutoglu-_turkey_-as-always_-stands-by-the-people-of-syria.en.mfa; "Foreign Minister Davutoğlu receives Speaker of the Syrian Turkmen Assembly," *Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (08/01/2014), <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/foreign-minister-davutoglu-receives-speaker-of-the-syrian-turkmen-assembly.en.mfa>.

powerful regional and autonomous country which would take the lead in any kind of change.⁵⁷⁶

This public attitude of the government was different than the reality on the ground, given its reliance on the West, but it corresponded to older statements of the Foreign Minister such as one from 2009: "As in the sixteenth century, when the Ottoman Balkans were rising, we will once again make the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East, together with Turkey, the centre of world politics in the future. That is the goal of Turkish foreign policy and we will achieve it."⁵⁷⁷ Therefore a more assertive foreign policy orientation can be identified, at least on a rhetoric level, informed by the Ottoman past, political Islamic notions, and paralleled by the projection of the country's perceived capabilities and aspirations rather than its limitations.

Given the systemic change that the "Arab Spring" itself constitutes, Turkey had to be very cautious and try to make the best out of a bad and unexpected situation. Although it was unfortunate for the AKP elites that Turkey was losing its traditional economic partners in the region, they already knew that Arabs looked up to Turkey and its socio-political system. According to a 2009 TESEV survey which was conducted in seven Arab countries, 63 percent of the interviewees saw Turkey's political system as a successful

⁵⁷⁶ "FM Defends Syria Policy, Says Turkey to Lead 'Wave of Change' in Mideast".

⁵⁷⁷ Quoted in, Hillel Fradkin and Lewis Libby, "Erdoğan's Grand Vision: Rise and Decline," *World Affairs*(March/April 2013), <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/erdogan%E2%80%99s-grand-vision-rise-and-decline>.

synthesis of Islam and Democracy.⁵⁷⁸ Turkey tried to capitalise on its popularity in the region and to create friendly bonds with the newly elected governments anew. After all, as seen in the previous chapter, the Middle East and its peoples are perceived by the AKP elites as a geo-cultural space of the former Ottoman Empire and, thus, as a geo-cultural sphere of influence of Turkey. In this context, also important are Ankara's efforts to acquire legitimisation for its gradually harsher stance towards the Assad regime. For example, the fact that its announcement of joining "any economic sanctions that the Arab League decides to impose on Syria, should Damascus fail to accept the League's proposal to accept international observers," is indicative of that tendency.⁵⁷⁹

In this light, in order for Turkey to be able to change its stance towards Syria, it had to separate the Syrian people – "Turkey's brothers" – from the Syrian regime – which went astray; and so it did. In parallel, AKP elites had to contextualise this stance within the broader framework of Turkey's support for democracy in the countries of the "Arab Spring;" as they also did. Thus the AKP ideology played an important role in filtering the regional systemic pressures and shaping the outcome of TFP towards Syria. That was mainly displayed in Turkey's effort to appear as the supporter of the Arab people and particularly the Syrian "brothers".

⁵⁷⁸ Mensur Akgün, Perçinoğlu Gökçe, and Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar, *The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East* (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2010, 2nd Edition). 18-21. It is worth mentioning that Turkey's regional popularity has gradually declined since then; see, Mensur Akgün and Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar, *The Perception of Turkey in the Middle East 2012* (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2012).

⁵⁷⁹ Champion, "Turkey Threatens Syria with Sanctions".

Moreover, if one looks at Turkey's Syria policy in conjunction with its stance towards the 2013 Egyptian coup where it bluntly supported the Muslim Brotherhood against the Egyptian military,⁵⁸⁰ or in conjunction with reports of Turkish support to Al Qaeda-related groups operating in Syria, then it becomes clear that Turkey's post-"Arab Spring" policies maintain an ideological character which also corresponds to the Sunni-Shia division that we have seen emerging after the "Arab Spring."⁵⁸¹ Turkey's close relationship with the transnational Islamic movement of the Muslim Brotherhood is also mentioned often – including the Egyptian and Syrian branches.⁵⁸² Lastly, it seems that although the "Arab Spring" circumstances forced Turkey towards a pragmatic turn to the West, the AKP elite ideology did not cease to be ideologically charged in public. Yet what needs to be kept in mind here is that the AKP elite ideology did not prevail over other pragmatic interests or pressures, as also seen in the analysis of the next intervening variable.

⁵⁸⁰ Jonathon Burch, "Turkey's Erdogan slams world's 'double standards' on Egypt," *Reuters* (19/07/2013), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/19/us-egypt-protests-turkey-idUSBRE96I0NJ20130719>.

⁵⁸¹ Nick Tattersall, "Al Qaeda's rise in northern Syria leaves Turkey in a dilemma," *Reuters* (17/10/2013), <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/10/17/uk-syria-crisis-turkey-qaeda-idUKBRE99G06T20131017>; Ruth Sherlock, "Al-Qaeda recruits entering Syria from Turkey safehouses," *The Telegraph* (30/10/2013), <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10415935/Al-Qaeda-recruits-entering-Syria-from-Turkey-safehouses.html>.

⁵⁸² Mohammad Abdel Kader, "Turkey's Relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood," *Al Arabiya Institute for Studies* (14/10/2013), <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2013/10/14/Turkey-s-relationship-with-the-Muslim-Brotherhood.html>; Tulin Daloglu, "What is Turkey's Role in Syria's Islamic Opposition?," *Al-Monitor* (27/09/2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/09/turkey-syria-islamic-opposition-role.html#>.

The second intervening variable for analysing Turkey's domestic political scene is the role of domestic interest groups. As in the previous cases studies that have been examined, in looking at how domestic interest groups influence different kinds of policies, both economy related interest groups and groups that are either related to the military establishment in Turkey or support similar policies are examined – e.g. the republican/nationalist opposition. Further, public opinion also needs to be looked at as a factor that policy-makers have to take into account at least to some extent in democratic or semi-democratic political systems, while it often reflects domestic social and political fragmentation. Ultimately, elite responses to pressures from domestic interest groups reflect the prevalence of pragmatism not least because these groups, more often than not, express and react to external systemic developments.

As demonstrated repeatedly thus far, economy plays an important role in Turkey's foreign policy-making. In this context a good picture of the role of TÜSIAD and MÜSIAD can be drawn based on statements and reports of their position, as well as on some other related facts, with regard to the government's Syria policy. It has been made clear that although the two associations claim good relations and cooperation between them,⁵⁸³ they have certain, if subtle, differences and political orientations: TÜSIAD represents what could be called "secular capital," and has at times found itself at odds with the AKP

⁵⁸³ International Coordinator and EU Representative, TÜSIAD, Brussels Branch, Dr. Bahadır Kaleağasi. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013; TÜSIAD Brussels branch research associate. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013. Identity of the interviewee in possession of the author.

government; on the other hand, MÜSIAD represents what can be called “Islamic capital” and is more closely associated with the AKP.⁵⁸⁴

Regarding the case in question, it has been reported that “prominent Syrian Turkish businessmen with ties to both the AKP and the [Syrian] Muslim Brotherhood,” including a member of MÜSIAD, may play an important role “in the next phase of Syrian-Turkish relations” as it is said that Turkey would favour a Sunni regime.⁵⁸⁵ Interplay between elite ideology and pro-government business interest can be seen here. This reflects both MÜSIAD’s business interests in Syria, its preference for conducting business in the region (unlike TÜSIAD that favours a balance between the Middle East and the West), its affinity with the AKP elite ideology and policies, as well as a reaffirmation of the claims regarding a pro-Sunni tendency in the AKP’s foreign policy.

On another note, it is important that both associations have warned the government that Turkey is “not immune to economic crises” (TÜSIAD),⁵⁸⁶ and that it “should beware of risks that linger before maintaining sustainable

⁵⁸⁴ Ezgi Başaran, “TÜSIAD Will Keep Speaking Up, Turkey’s Top boss Says,” *Hürriyet Daily News - Radical*(01/05/2012), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/tusiad-will-keep-speaking-up-turkeys-top-boss-says.aspx?pageID=238&nid=19638>. Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013; International Coordinator and EU Representative, TÜSIAD, Brussels Branch, Dr. Bahadır Kaleağasi. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013; TÜSIAD Brussels branch research associate. Phone interview with the author, October 2013. Identity of the interviewee in possession of the author.

⁵⁸⁵ Bayram Balci, “Turkey’s Relations with the Syrian Opposition,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*(13/04/2012), <http://carnegieendowment.org/2012/04/13/turkey-s-relations-with-syrian-opposition#>.

⁵⁸⁶ “Turkey not Immune to Crisis, TÜSIAD Says,” *Hürriyet Daily News - Anatolia News Agency*(08/12/2011), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-not-immune-to-crisis-tusiad-says.aspx?pageID=238&nID=8781&NewsCatID=344>.

growth in the country's economy" (MÜSIAD).⁵⁸⁷ It is thus suggested that despite Turkey's strong economy and high rates of growth there are still problems that need to be addressed and a degree of economic fragility. In terms of foreign policy-making this translates to a call for caution. Turkey is the host of hundreds of thousands of refugees and is faced with the PKK's asymmetrical threat; an intervention or even an open war with the Syrian regime would probably be the worst thing that could happen to Turkey, not just in economic terms.⁵⁸⁸

For its part, TÜSIAD, via its president, Muharrem Yılmaz, expressed its own concerns about Turkey's management of the Syrian civil war. Yılmaz said, "When the Arab Spring began to affect Syria, Turkey made efforts to manage this process peacefully. But the civil war couldn't be prevented. As the crisis gained new dimensions, the policy adopted proved to be ineffective and caused Turkey to be seen as one of the conflicting parties." Yılmaz also called for a permanent solution without a military intervention in Syria and added: "We expect and hope that Turkish foreign policy will be managed in a way to

⁵⁸⁷ "MÜSIAD Warns of Risks Haunting Sustainable Growth," *Today's Zaman* (21/06/2012), http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=284225.

⁵⁸⁸ MÜSIAD expressed its concerns and support about the humanitarian crisis and its impact on Syrians and Turkey. "MÜSIAD and İKV Organized a Conference on Arab Spring in the European Parliament," *Economic Development Foundation (İKV)* (2012), http://www.ikv.org.tr/icerik_en.asp?konu=haberler&id=421&baslik=M%EF%BF%BDS%EF%BF%BDAD+AND+%EF%BF%BDKV+ORGANIZED+A+CONFERENCE+ON+ARAB+SPRING+IN+THE+EUROPEAN+PARLIAMENT; "Help Düzce Müsiad And Young Müsiad Syria," *Haber Monitor* (15/01/2014), <http://www.habermonitor.com/en/haber/detay/help-duzce-musiad-and-young-musiad-syria/264741/>.

position our country as an agent in solution processes, and not in a confrontation, in line with its deep seated pacifist tradition.”⁵⁸⁹

Although it has not been possible to directly identify the channels through which business elites influence TFP, it has been seen how MÜSIAD would be open to more involvement in the Syrian civil war, while, according to evidence, it might have increasing benefits from a future Turkey-led regime change in Syria. As such, these economic interests could be boosting the AKP’s harsh stance towards Syria. On the other hand, neither MÜSIAD nor TÜSIAD favours an intervention, international conflict, or regional instability. In their view that would have a great and negative impact on Turkey’s economy, on its external economic relations.⁵⁹⁰ Again, the extent to which these views had an impact on preventing Turkey from getting militarily and directly more involved in Syria are not clearly evident. But deducting from previous evidence about the importance the AKP has given to business elites and economic interests, the attendance of business conferences by AKP officials, and the fact that Turkey has in fact not intervened in Syria, it could be suggested that the economic and business interests at stake, at least as expressed by these organisations, have been considered by government calculations.

⁵⁸⁹ In the same speech Yılmaz highlighted Turkey’s need to “refocus” on its EU candidacy for economic and democracy reasons. This indicates both TÜSIAD Western orientation as well as its pressure to return to West in the midst of the Middle East upheaval. See, “Turkish investors urge foreign policy revision,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (21/09/2013), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-investors-urge-foreign-policy-revision.aspx?PageID=238&NID=54867&NewsCatID=345>.

⁵⁹⁰ Academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013; Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013. Also see, Fehim Cenc, “Syrian Crisis Stifles Trade in Turkey’s Border Bazaars,” *Al-Monitor* (31/10/2012), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/business/2012/10/turkey-syria-trade-hatay.html###ixzz35qpJkT>.

Moving to the Turkish main political opposition, a similar stance can be observed. The CHP has firmly opposed any intention of the AKP government to intervene in Syria. Specifically, CHP's chairman, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, said that "The sovereign powers of the West are preparing the ground to get Turkey to enter into Syria for an armed conflict. If Turkey enters, getting out will be very difficult. I'm warning the government about this."⁵⁹¹ In a later occasion CHP's Deputy Chairman, Osman Korutürk, characterised the AKP's policy "a failure" and stated that "Turkey has turned into an interventionist country, meddling in the internal affairs of its neighbours, instigating war and taking part in regional conflicts." With regard to the Syrian crisis he added that "Turkey has become an isolated country within the international community due to its Syria policy. It pretended to back Annan's peace plan but has created a perception that it supports a military intervention in Syria."⁵⁹²

Importantly, CHP's Deputy Chairman, Osman Faruk Loğoğlu, said that his party's opposition, its "calls for peaceful solution" and its "concrete proposals to end the conflict" had a positive impact in preventing Turkey from

⁵⁹¹ Göksel Bozkurt and Serkan Demirtaş, "Assad will go, terror can not prevail: CHP," *Hürriyet Daily News*(30/07/2012), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/assad-will-go-terror-can-not-prevail-chp.aspx?pagerID=238&nID=26638&NewsCatID=338>; Michael Rubin, "Is Turkey Supporting Al-Qaeda in Syria?," *Commentary*(11/11/2013), <http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2013/11/11/is-turkey-supporting-al-qaeda-in-syria/>. It should be mentioned that Turkey has denied these allegation, but similar reports kept on emerging from international media. Johan Sennero and Humeyra Pamuk, "Turkish PM denies helping al Qaeda in Syria, criticizes Russia," *Reuters* (09/11/2013), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/11/07/us-syria-crisis-turkey-qaeda-idUSBRE9A60KL20131107>; Amberin Zaman, "Turkey backing off support for jihadists on Syria border," *Al-Monitor* (18/11/2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/11/turkey-backs-off-support-syria-rebels-border.html>. After the first reports, it was even reported that Ankara had detained Al Qaeda suspects; Suzan Frazer, "Turkish police detain al-Qaeda suspects," *USA Today*(14/01/2014), <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/01/14/turkey-qaeda-erdogan-assad/4471453/>.

⁵⁹² "FM Defends Syria Policy, Says Turkey to Lead 'Wave of Change' in Mideast".

entering a full-scale war with Syria.⁵⁹³ Although it is difficult to verify whether the AKP has indeed been influenced by CHP, as CHP officials suggest, it has been frequently argued that domestic political pressure has made it difficult for AKP to convince the public opinion for its regime change goals in Syria.⁵⁹⁴ Similarly, the MHP maintained the same stance towards the AKP's Syria policy saying that "What is happening in Syria may pit Turkey against Iran eventually" and that the Arab Uprisings are exploited by the world powers for their own interest.⁵⁹⁵ On the other hand, the pro-Kurdish BDP, the political wing of the PKK, disagreed with the AKP's policy towards Syria arguing that it was causing tense relations that could lead to war; it also opposed the government's anti-Kurdish policies since most of its votes come from the south-eastern Kurdish-majority provinces of Turkey.⁵⁹⁶

The opposition's stance demonstrates a clear domestic pressure against the AKP's policies towards Syria. Although it cannot be argued that domestic political pressure has played a primary role in affecting the AKP's Syria policy, it is argued that along with public opinion attitudes, as seen below, it has contributed to the general domestic sentiment which was against a more

⁵⁹³ CHP Deputy Chairman Osman Faruk Loğoğlu Interview with the author, Ankara, 30 September 2013. CHP Parliamentary Assistant Kivanç Özcan. Interview with the author, Ankara, 24 September 2013.

⁵⁹⁴ Kadri Gursel, "Erdogan Angered by Turkish Opposition Meeting With Assad," *Al-Monitor*(08/03/2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/ar/originals/2013/03/turkey-opposition-damascus-visit-against-ankara-syria-policy.html###ixzz35qnISZx7>.

⁵⁹⁵ Abdullah Bozkurt, "Bahçeli Lambasts Gov't's Handling of Syrian Crisis," *Today's Zaman* (15/12/2011), http://sundayszaman.com/sunday/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=265851.

⁵⁹⁶ "Turkish Opposition Slams Government Over Syria 'Warmongering'," *Today's Zaman* (12/04/2012), http://www.sundayszaman.com/sunday/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=277303; "BDP Accuses AKP for Lynching Campaign," *Hürriyet Daily News*(23/08/2012), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/bdp-accuses-akp-for-lynching-campaign.aspx?pageID=238&nID=28406&NewsCatID=338>.

aggressive stance towards Syria. Therefore, it is maintained that there is a significant correlation between the overall opposition to the AKP's Syria policy and especially its impact on public opinion attitudes and the AKP's decisions on Syria.⁵⁹⁷

A similar sentiment regarding the AKP's Syria policy is prevalent among the Kemalist military elites. Like the CHP, the traditional military establishment represents the Kemalist paradigm of TFP of *status quo* maintenance and non-adventurism. This was reflected, among other occasions, when Turkey did not allow American troops to enter Iraq through its territories during the 2003 invasion; the military played a key role in that decision. Similarly, in the case of Syria, the military would prefer to follow a policy of non-intervention especially at a time when the PKK attacks and the Kurdish problem within Turkey intensified.⁵⁹⁸

Yet it has to be reminded, once again, that because of the more tense civil-military relations since 2007/08 and the numerous imprisonments of military generals, there is significant consensus that the political power and decision-making influence of the military has been reduced to a great extent – if not lost.⁵⁹⁹ The replacement of the Kemalist Generals with the appointment of

⁵⁹⁷ A definite causal relationship could only be corroborated by interviews with AKP officials. As this is one of the limitations of this thesis it is suggested that further research could shed more light on this policy-making aspect.

⁵⁹⁸ Christopher Torchia, "Turkish military is key factor in Syria planning," *Bloomberg Business Week*(29/08/2012), <http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-08-29/turkish-military-is-key-factor-in-syria-planning#p2>.

⁵⁹⁹ Academic Dr. Louis Fishman. Phone interview with the author, 09 January 2014; academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013; Chairman of the Scientific Committee at International

commanders loyal to the government actually led the armed forces to even support the AKP on Syria, and specifically the cutting of ties between Turkey and Syria.⁶⁰⁰

No matter how important the economy, military, political elites and opposition are, as stated earlier policy-makers cannot neglect public opinion. In this light Turkey's stance towards the Syrian crisis could be explained to a great extent once one looks at public opinion polls.⁶⁰¹ A 2012 survey conducted by TNS on behalf of the Centre for Economy and Foreign Policy Researches (EDAM) showed that 56.2 percent of the respondents opposed an intervention in Syria while only 11.3 percent supported it. It is worth noting that 62.6 percent of the pro-BDP respondents opposed a military intervention in Syria while 42.1 percent of the pro-MHP, 41.7 percent of the pro-CHP, and 39.9 percent of the pro-AKP respondents voted against an intervention in Syria.⁶⁰²

This explains to some extent the stance of the government. That is, the AKP's Syria policy did not even appeal to its electoral base which according to

Strategic Research Organization (USAK) Dr. İhsan Bal. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013.

⁶⁰⁰ Rosemary Righter, "Turkey's Military Resignations Make Erdogan Even Stronger," *Newsweek* (07/08/2011), <http://www.newsweek.com/turkeys-military-resignations-make-erdogan-even-stronger-67153>; Christopher Phillips, "Into the Quagmire: Turkey's Frustrated Syria Policy," *Chatham House Briefing Paper*, no. MENAP BP 2012/04 (2012). Also, Academic Dr. Ahmet Sözen. Interview with the author, Famagusta, Cyprus, 26 December 2013.

⁶⁰¹ Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; CHP Parliamentary Assistant Kivanç Özcan. Interview with the author, Ankara, 24 September 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Dr. Ali Engin Oba. Interview with the author, Ankara, 12 June 2013.

⁶⁰² "Turks oppose Syrian conflict," *Hürriyet Daily News - Hürriyet* (15/06/2012), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turks-oppose-syrian-conflict.aspx?pageID=238&nID=23220&NewsCatID=341>.

the 2011 elections was close to 50 percent.⁶⁰³ That is not to say that the AKP always cares about public opinion attitudes in terms of domestic or foreign policy. Quite the contrary, for the AKP has frequently demonstrated a majoritarian approach over the past years.⁶⁰⁴ But the AKP's majoritarianism would not work in this instance if not only the majority of public opinion but also a large percentage of its own conservative constituency opposed its policies. In that sense, as Christopher Phillips notes, "Syria could prove a serious vote-loser for the ruling party," especially if taken into account that, in another poll, 67.1 percent of Turks viewed the steps taken by the government in relation to the Syrian conflict negatively.⁶⁰⁵

Finally, another problem in terms of public opinion is the Kurdish issue and Turkey's PKK policy which links to the BDP's stance against the government as well. In other words the AKP's disregard of and belligerent stance towards the Kurds of Syria – and of Turkey – exacerbate the negative perception of the AKP government among the public opinion of Turkish Kurds.⁶⁰⁶ The renewed efforts of the AKP to resolve the Kurdish issue in 2013

⁶⁰³ "June 12, 2011 General Election Results - Turkey Totals," Election Resources on the Internet, <http://www.electionresources.org/tr/assembly.php?election=2011>.

⁶⁰⁴ Ergun Özbudun, "AKP at the Crossroads: Erdoğan's Majoritarian Drift," *South European Society and Politics* 19, no. 2 (2014). Also, academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013.

⁶⁰⁵ "People Want New Political Party and Leader, Poll Shows," *Today's Zaman* (29/08/2012), http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=290815; Phillips, "Into the Quagmire: Turkey's Frustrated Syria Policy," 12.

⁶⁰⁶ Lamiya Adilgizi, "Turkey's Anti-Kurdish Stance in Syria Might Provoke Kurdish People in Turkey," *Today's Zaman* (05/08/2012), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-288624-turkeys-anti-kurdish-stance-in-syria-might-provoke-kurdish--people-in-turkey.html>.

could be understood within this framework, although they are not limited to that.⁶⁰⁷

Overall, there seems to be a correlation between the opposition of the public to a Turkish intervention in Syria – or the AKP's threatening stance against the country – and the fact that Turkey has not carried out its threats against Syria. Although no AKP or government official has said so, this suggests that social and political opposition has been taken into account by the AKP in taking decisions regarding Syria, mainly because its policies were opposed across parties and political loyalties among the society. After all, that the AKP needed the greatest public support possible in order for its re-election to be possible in the next local and presidential elections of 2014 should not be disregarded. Thus, the Turkish government seems to become more sensitive to public opinion when elections are forthcoming, given that it is not always sensitive to public opinion.

Intervening Variables and Turkey's post-"Arab Spring" Syria Policy

The analysis of the two domestic intervening variables highlighted three features with regard to Turkey's Syria policy. First, it has been suggested that AKP elites have a certain ideology which, along with other factors, prevented them from being quick in turning against Syria. Once they did, they made sure to maintain a "politically correct" stance which distinguished the Assad regime

⁶⁰⁷ See, for example, Johanna Nykänen, "Identity, Narrative and Frames: Assessing Turkey's Kurdish Initiatives," *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 2 (2013); Moudouros, "Initiatives for Solving the Kurdish Question: A Contradiction or 'an Ideological Consistency' of AKP."

from the “Syrian brothers” while they became openly more assertive and threatening in the context of their regional leadership and their responsibility towards their brotherly neighbours. That is partly because Syria is still part of the regional imagination of their worldview. This was also evident in Turkey’s broader Middle East – or better, Arab – policy after the “Arab Spring” during which it tried to gain the support of the Arab countries.

Indeed, this particular worldview was one of the reasons Turkey eventually turned against Assad. That is, after the conflict reached a point where the Syrian regime seemed to be unable to reverse the situation or appease the rebels, Turkey found itself having to take sides. The only logical decision given the relationship it wanted to develop with the broader region was to support the opposition – as it did in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt – thus strengthening its image as a democracy-promoter and maintaining good relations with the new governments of post-“Arab Spring” countries. Turkey took this decision regardless of the further instability that it entailed especially with regards to the Kurdish issue and Syria’s expected support for the PKK against Turkey. At that point it was a “necessary evil.” Material and ideological relations with the region outmatched these challenges; and yet they had to be dealt with as Turkey was losing Syria and insecurities were intensifying. It was then that TFP took advantage of the situation, by trying to turn an unfortunate challenge into opportunity and adopted the revisionist foreign policy goal of regime change.

Second, despite the AKP's assertiveness and ideologically charged rhetoric, it did not carry out any of its threats – e.g. imposition of no-fly zone, military intervention. Calls for restraint in combination with pressure from domestic business, political groups and the public opinion seem to have played a role in that as there was a widespread consensus among these forces that Turkey should not get more engaged in the Syrian conflict. The AKP could not afford to alienate the business elites by not taking into account calls for caution with regard to damaging economic prospects, the opposition parties and the public opinion altogether. That would lead it with great certainty to failure in the 2014 elections, not to mention that it could open the Pandora's Box of the region with Iran, Israel, Russia and the West getting openly and directly involved in Syria.

Third, Turkey's limited capabilities in bringing about regime change or dealing with the multiplying threats to its national security (independent variables), along with its inability to act due to domestic pressure despite its proclaimed assertiveness (intervening variables), constrained its foreign policy towards Syria and led it once again closer to its Western allies. This is a complex interpretation of Turkey's Syria policy that understands the external and domestic dynamics of TFP better than other works that focus on either the unit or the system level or are concerned with either security or economic motivations.⁶⁰⁸ Moreover, it ultimately establishes causal roles to each factors,

⁶⁰⁸ Michael Reynolds, "Echoes of Empire: Turkey's Crisis of Kemalism and the Search for an Alternative Foreign Policy," *The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings* Analysis Paper 26(June, 2012); Selçuk Esenbel and Altay Atlı, "Turkey's Changing Foreign Policy Stance: Getting Closer to Asia?," *Middle*

or identifies correlations, rather than listing different factors without a hierarchy of significance.⁶⁰⁹ The causal chains that led to this foreign policy behaviour are elaborated and clarified in the next chapter.

7.3. Turkish Foreign Policy towards Israel and Intervening Variables

After the “Arab Spring,” Turkish-Israeli relations deteriorated further. As explained, systemic changes in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean played a primary role in that. Yet Turkey’s stance towards Israel remains largely incomprehensible in the context of its bandwagoning with the West and the common threat perceptions that had once again developed between Turkey and Israel – i.e. Syria. One could argue that such an expectable rapprochement took place in March 2013, when, after Obama’s mediation, Israel apologised to Turkey about the Gaza flotilla incident and negotiations to settle the problem began.⁶¹⁰

However not only were the problems not resolved but a number of new ones emerged. Turkey accused Israel of being both behind the anti-government

East Institute(2013), <http://www.mei.edu/content/turkey%E2%80%99s-changing-foreign-policy-stance-getting-closer-asia>; Kemal Kirişçi, "The transformation of Turkish foreign policy: The rise of the trading state," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 40(2009): 29-57; Ali Aslan, "Problematizing Modernity in Turkish Foreign Policy: Identity, Sovereignty and Beyond," *Uluslararası Hukuk ve Politika* 9, no. 33 (2013): 27-57; Osman Bahadır Dincer and Dilek Karal, "Transformation of Identity in Turkish Foreign Policy," *Analist Journal*(May, 2011), <http://www.turkishweekly.net/columnist/3521/transformation-of-identity-in-turkish-foreign-policy.html>; Mustafa Aydın, "Turkish Foreign Policy; Framework and Analysis," *Centre for Strategic Research* Sam Papers(2004); Oğuzlu, "Middle Easternization of Turkey’s Foreign Policy."

⁶⁰⁹ Lesser, "Turkey's Third Wave."; Altunışık and Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP."; Özel, "Waves, Ways and Historical Turns: Turkey’s Strategic Quest."

⁶¹⁰ Harriet Sherwood and Ewen MacAskill, "Netanyahu Apologises to Turkish PM for Israeli Role in Gaza flotilla raid," *The Guardian*(22/03/2013), <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/22/israel-apologises-turkey-gaza-flotilla-deaths>.

protests that took place in Turkish urban centres in the summer of 2013, as well as the military coup against the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt that took place at around the same time.⁶¹¹ The two countries also disagreed on Israel's compensation for the victims of the raid on Gaza flotilla, which meant their negotiations ended in stalemate.⁶¹² In sum, despite efforts for reconciliation and partial resumption of cooperation in some sectors,⁶¹³ Turkey's stance, especially, remained provocative and demanding. This shows either lack of motivation or willingness for an essential rapprochement with Israel. To decode Ankara's policy its post-"Arab Spring" behaviour is looked at and especially the September 2011 turning point when the UN Palmer report was released and Turkey downgraded its diplomatic and military relations with Israel. The analysis of the intervening variables flushes out the role of both ideology and pragmatism in Turkey's stance.

AKP Elite Ideology

Ankara's Israel policy is a complex and yet interesting issue to be examined through the lens of AKP elite ideology, though such an approach is inadequate in itself. As seen, one could attribute Turkey's gradual policy

⁶¹¹ Stuart Winer, "Turkish Deputy PM blames Jews for Gezi Protests," *The Times of Israel*(2/07/2013), <http://www.timesofisrael.com/turkish-deputy-pm-blames-jews-for-gezi-protests/>; "Israel Behind Coup to oust Morsi, Turkish PM Erdoğan says," *Hürriyet Daily News*(20/08/2013), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/israel-behind-coup-to-oust-morsi-turkish-pm-erdogan-says.aspx?PageID=238&NID=52876&NewsCatID=338>.

⁶¹² "Turkey, Israel Disagree on Compensation Payment," *The Daily Star*(25/07/2013), <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Jul-25/225009-turkey-israel-disagree-on-compensation-payment.ashx#axzz2rykg1u00>.

⁶¹³ See, for example, Gulsen Solaker, "Israel, Turkey in First Defense Deal Since ties Frozen: Sources," *Reuters* (19/03/2013), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/19/us-turkey-israel-defence-idUSBRE91IOT320130219>.

change toward the West and Israel, since 2002, to structural factors and changes in its threat perceptions. On the other hand, it seems impossible to touch upon these issues without exploring the ideological outlook of AKP elites. Some anti-Semitic tendencies have already been identified in the rhetoric and ideology of AKP elites. In addition, it has been suggested that AKP elites have a close ideological affinity to the geo-cultural space of the Middle East which creates the need for Ankara to distance itself from Israel in order to approach the Arab and Muslim world.

Indicative are, again, relevant remarks from Davutoğlu's book, *Strategic Depth*. There, Davutoğlu writes that Turkey should "maintain a flexible stand in foreign policy practice" in order to adapt to the regional dynamics and avoid being identified with Israel's strategies.⁶¹⁴ In the same book he stated that "the dominance over the Middle East has been the most important and necessary step for every state that wishes to dominate globally," adding that the Middle East is the region where Islamic civilisation and culture predominate.⁶¹⁵ More examples about the expression of anti-Israeli sentiments by Turkish officials, like the outburst of PM Erdoğan at Davos, have already been mentioned.

These ideological features among AKP elites provide the framework within which the role of ideology in Turkey's, and particularly PM Erdoğan's, reaction to the UN Palmer report can be analysed. The report was first leaked

⁶¹⁴ Davutoğlu, *Strategic Depth*: 108.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 212-13.

by *The New York Times*⁶¹⁶ and then President Abdullah Gül was quick to question its legitimacy; that was mainly because it found that Israel's naval blockade of Gaza was legal.⁶¹⁷ After that Turkey expelled the Israeli ambassador and suspended its military agreements with Israel, waiting on Tel Aviv's apology. Later, PM Erdoğan lashed out at both the UN and Israel. Following Israel's refusal to apologise he "announced that Turkey is completely suspending military and commercial ties with Israel and will impose further sanctions on the Jewish state"⁶¹⁸ while he "threatened that Turkish gunboats would accompany Turkish 'humanitarian' vessels the next time they set sail for Gaza."⁶¹⁹ What could explain Erdoğan's belligerent rhetoric and, as one could argue, overreaction against an important ally like Israel?

Two things related to elite ideology seem to explain this stance. The first one is purely ideological. Tulin Daloglu, writing about the Gezi Park protest of 2013, notes the rising anti-Semitism among the AKP elites: "It's mind-boggling trying to figure out how overt anti-Semitism has crept into the political discourse of some Turkish politicians to blame the Jews and Israel for everything that goes wrong in the country."⁶²⁰ In conjunction with previous mentions about these AKP ideological predispositions, this shows a widespread

⁶¹⁶ Neil MacFarquhar and Ethan Bronner, "Report Finds Naval Blockade by Israel Legal but Faults Raid," *The New York Times*(01/11/2011),

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/02/world/middleeast/02flotilla.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

⁶¹⁷ USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

⁶¹⁸ Zaman, "PM: Turkey to impose more sanctions on Israel, boost presence in east Med".

⁶¹⁹ Herb Keinon, "Erdogan Threatens to Send Gunboats with Next Flotilla," *The Jerusalem Post*(08/09/2011), <http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Erdogan-threatens-to-send-gunboats-with-next-flotilla>.

⁶²⁰ Tulin Daloglu, "Atalay Claims Jewish Diaspora Was Behind Gezi Park Protests," *Al-Monitor* (03/07/2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/07/turkey-protests-gezi-jewish-diaspora-conspiracy.html#>.

anti-Semitic tendency not only in foreign relations but also in domestic politics; evidence of ideological drivers.

The second one relates to another driver, both ideological and pragmatic: Turkey's need for anti-Israeli rhetoric to approach the Arab world. It is known that the "Arab Spring" gave rise to pro-Islamic governments that expressed anti-Semitic and anti-Western feelings at the social and political level. This was demonstrated both at the public opinion level, through surveys in Arab countries, as well as at the political level with anti-Semitic remarks such as Egypt President's (2012-2013), Mohamed Morsi.⁶²¹ As seen from rhetoric in Ankara, this development was seen as "fertile ground" by Turkey, which means that it was both positive for its ideological outlook and with the potential of increasing material benefits. In this context it is important to note that Erdoğan's threats towards Israel were made a few days before a trip that he was going to have in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.⁶²²

The case under examination shows that ideological features are salient in the AKP's foreign policy while it underlines a shift in Turkey's domestic politics

⁶²¹ *One Year Later...Egyptians Remain Optimistic, Embrace Democracy and Religion in Political Life*, (Washington: Pew Research Centre - Global Attitudes Project, 2012); Jeffrey Goldberg, "Praise Arab Spring, Except for Anti-Semitism," *BloombergView*(28/11/2011), <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2011-11-29/praise-arab-spring-except-for-anti-semitism-jeffrey-goldberg>; Gil Shefler, "Arab Spring sees Rise in Anti-Semitism," *The Jerusalem Post*(01/22/2012), <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Arab-Spring-sees-rise-in-anti-Semitism>; David D. Kirkpatrick, "Morsi's Slurs Against Jews Stir Concern," *The New York Times*(14/01/2013), <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/15/world/middleeast/egypts-leader-morsi-made-anti-jewish-slurs.html?pagewanted=all&r=1&>; James Zogby, *Arab Attitudes* (Washington: The American Institute Foundation, 2011).

⁶²² Arsu, "Amid Tensions With Israel, Turkey Threatens Increased Naval Presence."

that, considering the AKP's and Erdoğan's growing power,⁶²³ increasingly calls for more individual-level approaches in some cases – e.g. political psychology. However it must not be neglected that such ideological features have been evident throughout the AKP's governance and thus they do not only concern the PM. Lastly it can be seen that ideology, and ideologically informed rhetoric, has both the role of a foreign policy driver as well as of a communicative tool that serves Turkey's regional or international image and maintains the balances between non- and pro-Western policies and discourse. Although there is also a material aspect to that, which concerns the good relations of Turkey with the neighbourhood and regional security and stability, it is not unrelated to the AKP's ideological vision for and perception of the Middle East; a different vision and perception than the one of the previous Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment. This suggests that ideology does indeed filter systemic developments and shapes interests and foreign policy behaviour.

⁶²³ Especially after the AKP's second election in 2007 and its success in the 2010 referendum about the new constitution, as noted in previous chapters (see, e.g. Chapter 3). Aaron Stein, "Explaining Erdogan's Decision-Making," *Turkey Wonk* (25/03/2014), <http://turkeywonk.wordpress.com/2014/03/25/explaining-erdogans-decision-making/>; John Hannah, "The End of Erdogan?," *Foreign Policy* (20/12/2013), http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/12/20/the_end_of_erdogan; Halil Karaveli, "Erdogan Loses It," *Foreign Affairs* (09/02/2014), <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/140726/halil-karaveli/erdogan-loses-it>. Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; academic Dr. Nikos Moudouros. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 25 August 2013; academic Dr. Ahmet Sözen. Interview with the author, Famagusta, Cyprus, 26 December 2013.

It has been seen that the AKP elite's response to the UN Palmer report has been to completely suspend Turkey's commercial, military and defence ties with Israel which, as explained, was very much a product of elite ideology and particularly the frustration of PM Erdoğan. However, later on the same day of PM Erdoğan's remarks, other Foreign Ministry officials said that the PM was referring to the commercial aspect of defence relations, and that "commercial ties will not be affected."⁶²⁴ Commercial ties remained indeed unaffected since, as elaborated in the previous chapter, the trade between the two countries has increased over the last years and "in 2011 Turkey became Israel's sixth export market overall."⁶²⁵ The question that could be asked here is: what domestic factors drove the PM's actions and the making of the final decision/announcement by the Foreign Ministry?

It has been suggested that the PM might not have been fully aware of the volume of trade between his country and Israel.⁶²⁶ This could explain Ankara's need to moderate the PM's remarks. Whether that corresponds to reality or not it is clear that, in one way or another, material – and more specifically, economic – factors played a role. Apart from the trade volume, cases in point are the recorded reactions to the AKP's stance from the business community.

For example, a former chairman of a pipeline company clearly noted the independent dynamics that drive Israel's oil supply from Turkish ports: "The

⁶²⁴ Zaman, "PM: Turkey to impose more sanctions on Israel, boost presence in east Med".

⁶²⁵ Çağaptay and Evans, "The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade Relations," 2.

⁶²⁶ Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013.

Turks cannot stop the flow of oil through the pipeline or prevent oil tankers arriving at Ceyhan to take on shipments [to Israel] without being sued and suffering a serious blow to their credibility in the eyes of the business community."⁶²⁷ This refers to both the international treaties that safeguard such practices as well as to the role of the business communities in Turkey. Furthermore, major Turkish companies, such as Yilmazar Construction Group and Zorlu Group, do not seem to be willing to abandon their profitable businesses in Israel for foreign policy purposes.⁶²⁸

After the *Mavi Marmara* raid and Turkey's reaction, not only did the aforementioned two companies refuse to halt their business but Yilmazar Group's CEO also threatened to sue the Prime Minister "for hurting its business by increasing political tensions between the two countries."⁶²⁹ In this light, the constant pressures and importance of the business community in Ankara's efforts not to cut off economic ties with Israel become clearer.

Also important is that associations that represent these businesses advocate for good relations with Israel. One such example is TÜSIAD which at an important press conference referred to Israel as a top priority in its international strategic economic planning.⁶³⁰ Although TÜSIAD officials do not think that their overall policy played a primary role in Ankara's stance, they do

⁶²⁷ Amiram Barkat, "Turkey Cannot Block Israel's Oil Supply," *Globes* (22/09/2011), <http://www.globes.co.il/en/article-1000685052>.

⁶²⁸ Çağaptay and Evans, "The Unexpected Vitality of Turkish-Israeli Trade Relations," 3.

⁶²⁹ Benjamin Harvey, "Turkish Builder to Sue Erdogan for Israeli Spat After Business Damaged," *Bloomberg* (23/07/2010), <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-06-23/builder-to-sue-erdogan-s-government-for-comments-hurting-israel-business.html>.

⁶³⁰ "Top Bosses Eye Smart Investments," *Hürriyet Daily News* (21/03/2012), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/top-bosses-eye-smart-investments.aspx?pageID=238&nID=16499&NewsCatID=345>.

highlight that their association advocated for the sustainability of Turkish-Israeli economic relations despite the political rift.⁶³¹

As the economic backbone of the AKP, MÜSIAD, and its investments, is also important. That is why then Minister of Economy, Zafer Çağlayan, tried to appease the association. In one of his meetings with a MÜSIAD delegation, soon after the 2011 diplomatic crisis with Israel, he said: “we are going to carry out our commercial relations with Israel in the level of counsellor. But there is not an interruption in our commercial relations,” adding that, “Actually, Israel has lost one of its good commercial partners.”⁶³² His statement tried on the one hand to reassure the association that their businesses will not be interrupted while on the other hand tried to blame Israel for the occurred problems in an effort to avoid negative reactions from the businessmen towards the government.⁶³³ All evidence points to the fact that economic ties with Israel and the AKP’s relations with the business community were too important to jeopardise. It can thus be said that PM Erodğan’s reaction, although genuine, did not take into account these realities and, therefore, had to be altered.

Further into Turkey’s domestic political scene, the primary opposition, CHP, had also firmly opposed the AKP’s Israel policy. Referring to the overall failure of TFP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, stated that, “Iran and Syria were enemies of

⁶³¹ International Coordinator and EU Representative, TÜSIAD, Brussels Branch, Dr. Bahadır Kaleağasi. Phone interview with the author, 03 October 2013; TÜSIAD Brussels branch research associate. Phone interview to the author, 03 October 2013. Identity of the interviewee in possession of the author.

⁶³² “Turkey Recalls Chief Commercial Counsellor,” *Anadolu Agency* (07/09/2011), <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/s/24711--turkey-recalls-chief-commercial-counsellor>.

⁶³³ This also correlates to comments saying that politics are largely dissociated from economy and that AKP politicians try to avoid interfering in economic relations. Academic Dr. Louis Fishman. Skype interview with the author, 09 January 2014; Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013.

Israel. Now Iran, Syria and Israel are enemies of Turkey. Is this successful foreign policy?"⁶³⁴ With regard to the AKP's Israel policy, the nationalist MHP maintained the same stance characterising its "zero problems" approach "bankrupt".⁶³⁵ On the other hand the pro-Kurdish BDP's opinion of the government's Israel policy can be summarised in one of its candidates statements: "We have a prime minister who is very close to Israel when the issue is Kurdish people, and the same prime minister turns into a hawk when the issue is Hamas."⁶³⁶

Generally, opposition political parties played a role in pressuring the AKP both inside and outside the parliament. Although it seems that their calls have been taken into account by the AKP, they did not have a primary impact since

⁶³⁴ "CHP, AKP row over Israel policy worsens," *Hürriyet Daily News*(09/11/2011), <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=chp-akp-row-over--israel-policy-worsens-2011-09-11>.

⁶³⁵ "Israeli rift shows zero problems policy failed, MHP leader says," *Today's Zaman* (06/09/2011), <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-255920-israeli-rift-shows-zero-problems-policy-failed-mhp-leader-says.html>.

⁶³⁶ Emine Kart, "BDP-led bloc's foreign policy refers to Atatürk's motto of peace," *Today's Zaman* (01/06/2011), http://www.sundayszaman.com/sunday/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?newsId=245844. Although Israel follows a pro-Kurdish policy, especially in terms of Iranian and Iraqi Kurds, it had in the past helped Turkey in its fight against the PKK. However, after the deterioration of their relations many reports said that Israel is covertly helping the PKK. Considering Israel's often unclear stance on the Kurds, BDP was perhaps trying to present a victimised image of the Kurds in order to oppose the government. See, Ofra Bengio, "Surprising Ties between Israel and the Kurds," *Middle East Quarterly* (Summer, 2014): 1-12; Robert Olson, "Turkey and Syria Since the Gulf War: The Kurdish Question and the Water Problem," in *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy*, ed. Ferhad Ibrahim and Gulistan Gurbey (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), 137-38; Sedat Laciner, "Why is Israel Watching the PKK?," *Al-Monitor*(10/01/2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2013/01/israel-monitoring-pkk.html#>; "Israeli Herons give intelligence to PKK, intelligence officers say," *Today's Zaman*(17/01/2012), http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_israeli-herons-give-intelligence-to-pkk-intelligence-officers-say_268815.html; Annie Robbins, "Israeli Drones are Reported Spying on Turkey for the Kurdish Group PKK," *Mondoweiss*(18/01/2012), <http://mondoweiss.net/2012/01/israeli-drones-are-reported-spying-on-turkey-for-the-kurdish-group-pkk>.

the AKP holds the dominant role.⁶³⁷ In the same vein, CHP's Deputy Chairman, Osman Faruk Loğoğlu, said that "CHP Deputies asked many parliamentary questions on this issue [AKP's Israel stance]." He then added that "PM Erdoğan played a double game. In the domestic sphere, he wanted to appear as a strong voice against Israel. But in reality, he knew that he could not cut off ties with Israel completely."⁶³⁸ This suggests that the AKP's rhetoric was adopted for communicative reasons. Yet as seen, the AKP's communication policies are not dissociated from the ideology of its elites. Lastly, the fact that PM Erdoğan knew he could not completely cut off Turkish-Israeli ties points to forces that would not allow something like that; such as the ones examined here.

As far as the military is concerned, just like in other cases, after the late 2000s, it was very much controlled by the government and therefore had limited to no role in decision-making. What is worth mentioning is the gradual rise of other actors, such as think tanks. For example, two interviewees from the Turkish think tank International Strategic Research Organization (USAK) argued that their pressure, along with the pressure of other civil society and political actors, had a role in preventing Turkey from taking part in the second flotilla to Gaza through analyses and advice that they provided to the government. Although this goes beyond the analytical framework, it suggests

⁶³⁷ Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013; academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

⁶³⁸ CHP Deputy Chairman, Osman Faruk Loğoğlu. Interview with the author, Ankara, 30 September 2013. Academic Dr. Özlem Tür. Interview with the author, Ankara, 23 September, 2013; Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013; and USAK researcher Osman Bahadır Dinçer. Interview with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013.

that, according to the case at hand, civil society could contribute to domestic pressure and eventually affect foreign policy behaviour. However, as the interviewees noted, the final decision lays with Erdogan.⁶³⁹

On the public opinion front different polls and studies show a rise of anti-Semitic feelings in Turkey throughout the 2000s and especially after the *Mavi Marmara* incident.⁶⁴⁰ Although such predispositions are prevalent within Turkish society, half of the interviewees of one survey added that "Israel's actions have a 'major influence' on their opinions about Jews."⁶⁴¹ Given these public opinion attitudes, one can see how public opinion and elite ideology are compatible on this subject; that is, AKP ideological expressions find fruitful ground in public opinion.

As seen earlier, the rise of anti-Israeli sentiments coincided, not accidentally, with the rise of anti-Americanism following the US policies in the Middle East after 9/11.⁶⁴² Moreover, throughout the last years, and especially since Israel's Gaza assault, there has been an even more profound rise of anti-Semitism in Turkey. This was not only reflected in statements made by government politicians but also in multiple incidents that occurred at the societal level and triggered tensions between the Jewish community and groups in Turkish society.⁶⁴³ Lastly, Israel's 2010 raid on the "Gaza flotilla" had

⁶³⁹ Osman Bahadır Dinçer and Dr. Ihsan Bal. Interviews with the author, Ankara, 25 September 2013; Turkish Ambassador (ret.) Oktay Aksoy. Interview with the author, Ankara, 13 June 2013.

⁶⁴⁰ USAK, *USAK II. Foreign Policy Perception Survey*.

⁶⁴¹ "Global survey finds 2 in 3 adults in Turkey anti-Semitic".

⁶⁴² Grigoriadis, "Friends No More? The Rise of Anti-American Nationalism in Turkey."; Erdoğan, "The Missing Element."

⁶⁴³ Zaman, "After Gaza: Rising anti-Semitism in Turkey?."

exacerbating effects while at that time anti-Semitism had become not only a Turkish but a global phenomenon as well, as a reaction to Israel's actions that have been perceived as wrong and illegitimate.⁶⁴⁴ It is also noteworthy that in line with growing regional anti-Semitism amidst the "Arab Spring,"⁶⁴⁵ a 2014 Pew survey showed that 86% of the Turks have an unfavourable opinion of Israel. This makes Israel the country that is looked upon unfavourably the most in Turkey (only 2% of the respondents expressed favourable opinion) without that, however, indicating necessarily anti-Semitic attitudes.⁶⁴⁶

As in other cases of Turkey's Israel policy examined thus far, Turkish public opinion seems to be highly receptive to the AKP's anti-Israeli rhetoric. And while it has proven to be against Turkey's engagement in conflicts, it favours anti-Semitic ideologically charged discourse. This also reflects the importance of the AKP's electoral constituency which lies in Turkey's large conservative population, as well as the fact that the AKP's roots are in that very constituency. Therefore, there is truth in that AKP elites use that kind of rhetoric for domestic strategic purposes; yet, they are essentially targeting the audience out of which they emerged, and that makes their references at least to some extent genuine, not merely populist.

Intervening Variables and Turkey's post-"Arab Spring" Israel Policy

⁶⁴⁴ "Gaza flotilla raid increased global anti-Semitism, study finds"; Farkash, "Jews flee Turkey over anti-Semitism".

⁶⁴⁵ Goldberg, "Praise Arab Spring, Except for Anti-Semitism"; "The NSC and the Secretariat General of the NSC within the Framework of the 1982 Constitution".

⁶⁴⁶ Jacob Poushter, "The Turkish People Don't Look Favorably Upon the U.S, or any Other Country, Really," *Pew Research Centre*(31/10/2014), <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/10/31/the-turkish-people-dont-look-favorably-upon-the-u-s-or-any-other-country-really/>.

The intervening variables have examined how elite ideology and domestic interest groups have filtered systemic changes in the Middle East and particularly Israeli policies. Through focusing on the AKP's reaction to the release of the UN Palmer report, a few things have become evident. First, the AKP elite ideologically informed rhetoric and foreign policy practice are, more often than not, inconsistent.⁶⁴⁷ That is, despite Erdoğan's remarks and Davutoğlu's stated ideas, the relations between Turkey and Israel may have deteriorated on certain levels but trade relations are strong, let alone that their bilateral strategic agreements have not been officially cancelled.

However the two countries remained in diplomatic crisis, even after Israel's apology, which means that ideology-informed policies and rhetoric, as well as the role of the PM's personality, hinder cooperation or reconciliation with Israel at least in some sectors; even in the midst of the "Arab Spring." At the same time, domestic interest groups, especially the business sector, seem to be playing a significant part in moderating the AKP's short-tempered stance, at least with regard to economic policies, which means that they filter external developments differently largely because of their material interests at stake. Evidence shows that if the AKP did not have to take into account these groups and their interests in making foreign policy, TFP behaviour would have been less pragmatic and perhaps more radical.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁷ Dr. Gökhan Bacık, shared the same view. Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013.

⁶⁴⁸ Again, this is a product of deduction and correlation rather than direct causation. It does, however, remain important as it provides a valid explanation about the constraints in Turkish foreign policy-making.

Something that has occurred repeatedly in the post-2011 period is the frequent gap between security and economic interests. Just like business elites would not like further destabilization in Syria and a full scale war, they did not favour bad relations with Israel. This conclusion would not have been possible to draw had the thesis focused on security interests alone – as neo-realists do – or only on economic interests – like neoliberal approaches.⁶⁴⁹ Most significantly, neorealist approaches have focused on the role of common security threats and power changes in the formation of the Turkish-Israeli alliance, on the lack of such factors in the deterioration of their relations, as well as predicted that the bilateral relationship would improve due to the growing insecurities of the “Arab Spring.”⁶⁵⁰ Thus far, neorealist predictions have not been realised while Turkish-Israeli relations remain highly deteriorated amidst significant mutual regional security threats such as the Syrian civil war. Therefore, the NcR approach of this thesis has provided a more valid explanation of this relationship as it suggests that domestic factors influenced Turkey’s

⁶⁴⁹ Spyridon N. Litsas, "Bandwagoning for Profit and Turkey: Alliance Formations and Volatility in the Middle East," *Israel Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2014): 125-39; Tarik Oğuzlu, "The Changing Dynamics of Turkey-Israeli Relations: A Structural Realist Account," *Mediterranean Politics* 15, no. 2 (2010): 273-88; André Bank and Roy Karadag, "The Political Economy of Regional Power: Turkey under the AKP," *GIGA Research Unit* Institute of Middle East Studies, no. 204 (September, 2012); John McSweeney, "The 'Turkish Model' for the Middle East: Reproducing Neoliberal Hegemony?," *E-International Relations* (23/08/2012), <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/08/23/the-turkish-model-for-the-middle-east-reproducing-neoliberal-hegemony/>; Çiğdem Nas, "Changing Dynamics of Turkish Foreign Policy and the EU," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (2010): 117-31.

⁶⁵⁰ Suha Bolukbasi, "Behind the Turkish-Israeli Alliance: A Turkish View," *Journal of Palestine Studies* XXIX, no. 1 (1999): 21-35; Daniela Huber, "Turkish-Israeli Relations in a Changing Strategic Environment" *Istituto Affari Internazionali* Commentary 05 (September, 2012); Inbar, "The Resilience of Israeli-Turkish Relations," 593; Ofra Bengio and Gencer Özcan, "Changing Relations: Turkish - Israeli - Arab Triangle," *Centre for Strategic Research - SAM* (March-May, 2000): 1-3.

inconsistent Israel policies by filtering systemic developments in particular ways.

Furthermore, the interplay between AKP elite ideology and public opinion, has allowed for the assessment of the AKP's response to public attitudes as well as identifying common ideological features between the AKP and society that sometimes make the conduct of foreign policy easier for the AKP. The significance of each factor in the making of TFP is clarified further in the final chapter.

7.4. Conclusions

Based on the material presented, it can be concluded that the "Arab Spring" and other systemic changes in the Eastern Mediterranean affected TFP to a great extent. With regard to the cases in question, they changed Turkish-Syrian relations from amity to enmity and they exacerbated the Turkish-Israeli crisis, or prevented it from reaching substantive reconciliation after the Israeli apology. From that perspective, the importance of the intervening variables surfaces once more as AKP elite ideology gave a distinctive character to TFP reaction and behaviour towards these systemic changes. Thus it could be speculated that, had a Kemalist government been in power, different foreign policies would have been followed – e.g. less assertive behaviour towards Syria, greater reliance on the West, and significantly less crisis prone attitude towards Israel. Not because ideology is primary over systemic factors, but because

systemic changes would have been understood and dealt with differently by the previous dominant elite ideology.

However this does not mean that AKP elite ideology is independent from other domestic interests, although at times it does demonstrate independence from external pressures. Such an observation is important given that in the literature on TFP AKP ideology is often decoupled from pragmatism and rationality.⁶⁵¹ But as stated at the very beginning of this thesis, rationality is relative and, as the examination of AKP elite ideology showed, pragmatism or material incentives are not static but linked to ideas and beliefs.

As such, material interests are filtered and shaped by ideology. For example, economic interests, national security threats, and public opinion considerations, may vary depending on the ideology of the policy-maker (or policy-making elites). Thus material and ideological incentives are, more often than not, intertwined. In many cases, the AKP's elite ideology stems from and targets these elements; a fact that, in turn, blurs the line between ideological and material incentives. Lastly it should be remembered that the external level remains the primary driver that feeds the elites with information and allows for this dynamic process and interplay between material interests and ideas.

⁶⁵¹ See, for example, Alexander Murinson, "Turkish Foreign Policy in the 21st Century," *Mideast Security and Policy Studies* 97(September, 2012); Carol Migdalovitz, "AKP's Domestically-Driven Foreign Policy," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (2010/11): 37-45; Svante Cornell, "Turkish Foreign Policy under the AKP: The Rift with Washington," in *Turkish Foreign Policy under the AKP: The Rift with Washington (Policy Notes: No.3)*, ed. Soner Cagaptay (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2011), 3-6; Cornell, "What Drives Turkish Foreign Policy?," 13-24; Gözaydın, "Ahmet Davutoğlu."; Behlül Özkan, "Turkey, Davutoglu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 56, no. 4 (2014): 119-40.

The achieved combination of levels and foreign policy interests as well as the plurality of factors accounted for domestically and their specific connection to related independent variables, complements even those existing studies that try to integrate the two levels and their different drivers by fleshing out and specifying the relationship and interaction between levels and drivers.⁶⁵² Nearly no other comprehensive effort to analyse TFP has taken into account these levels and factors in such a systematic way. This view has allowed for a dynamic analysis of Turkey that is especially appropriate given the many changes that both the region and the country have undergone during the past decade or so.

Moreover, it allowed for a comprehensive account of domestic actors and factors in the context of a globalized world and economy as well as the rise of non-state actors based on debates in the existing literature on TFP. Overall, it is argued, that this multileveled and multidimensional approach is more appropriate in analysing today's TFP. Also, it is suggested that it is even more complete than other "third way" and even NcR attempts that employ less variables, specifically because it accounts in detail for each external and domestic factor while illuminating to the extent possible the – often causal – relationship between ideational and material factors in different policy sectors –

⁶⁵² See, for example, Altunışık and Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP," 569-87; Han, "Paradise Lost," 55-69; Özel, "Waves, Ways and Historical Turns: Turkey's Strategic Quest."; İşeri and Dilek, "The Limitations of Turkey's New Foreign Policy Activism in the Caucasian Regional Security Complexity," 41-54; Faruk Yalvaç, "Approaches to Turkish Foreign Policy: A Critical Realist Analysis," *Turkish Studies* 15, no. 1 (2014): 117-38.

i.e. security and economy.⁶⁵³ Lastly, it can be suggested that the inclusion of different variables at the system and unit level has allowed for the better explanation of apparent paradoxes in TFP.

⁶⁵³ Mufti, *Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea*; Özel, "Waves, Ways and Historical Turns: Turkey's Strategic Quest."; İşeri and Dilek, "The Limitations of Turkey's New Foreign Policy Activism in the Caucasian Regional Security Complexity."; Han, "Paradise Lost." More specifically, this thesis provides a more complex approach and understanding of TFP than, for example, these cited studies, as it looks deeper into the domestic level examining different domestic interests, as expressed by the government and various groups, and integrates them into a system-level analysis. It also goes beyond the construction of a historical narrative that focuses on a small number of factors and thus provides an analysis that does not only explain what the drivers of TFP under AKP are but also their functions and complex relations.

8. Comparative Analysis: Drivers, Causal Chains, and Foreign Policy Behaviour

In line with the overarching methodology followed to answer the central question “what are the foreign policy-making dynamics under the AKP?,” the thesis turns to what can be considered as its most important part. The logic, as explained in the theoretical and methodological sections, is to put the foreign policy drivers identified in each case study in comparative perspective. In general two kinds of comparisons are made: Cross-Case (CC) and Cross-Time (CT). Cross-Case analysis compares causal chains (between the independent and intervening variables) that lead to TFP behaviour (dependent variable), which may vary between revisionism and *status quo*, and it does so for the two different time periods. Cross-Time analysis compares the results of CC analysis from both periods in order to reach more general and generalizable conclusions with regard to Turkey’s Middle East foreign policy drivers, its behaviour and issues of continuity and change.

The analysis for each period of the case studies has already been conducted in the previous chapters and it is here summarised based on some common denominators between the case studies; mainly, Turkey’s economic and security policies. As analysed earlier, the division of the timeframe into two periods (2002-2011 and 2011-2013) is based on the “most similar” comparative method which suggests that change in one variable divides the cases. It is argued that this variable is the primary independent variable, namely, international power changes, which, in turn, impacts the other independent and

intervening variables. This corresponds with NcR's premise that the international system is the primary determinant of foreign policy.

The CC analysis starts with summaries of the case studies findings for each period, separately. Thereby, the first section draws CC conclusions for the 2002-2011 period while the second section for the 2011-2013 period. According to the theoretical framework, in the summaries of the CC analysis the different strategies employed by Turkey in each case can be identified so as to determine variation in TFP behaviour. Moreover, these strategies are presented as foreign policy outcomes that occur after causal chains between foreign policy drivers (independent and intervening variables) for each foreign policy sector (economic or security). These processes are summarised in tables that also include counterfactual estimations of what the foreign policy outcome would be under the previous political establishment. The tables include only the variables or factors at play in each case.

Consequently, the respective CC conclusions of the two periods are compared in order for a CT comparison to be made and patterns and differences in causal chains and foreign policy outcomes and behaviour to be identified. More general comments and discussion about the findings, the strengths and limitations of this thesis can be found in the concluding chapter.

8.1. Cross-Case Analysis

The CC analysis starts with the first period (2002-2011) and then the second one (2011-2013). Going back to the empirical analysis of the two case

studies, and the sub-case studies, the drivers behind Ankara's foreign policies for each case are broken down in order to eventually compare the variation in foreign policy behaviour thus identifying causal chains and patterns of behaviour. The results are evaluated in comparison to the next period through the CT analysis.

8.1.1. 2002-2011: System-Level and Unit-Level Variables

The period between 2002 and 2011 is one that could be generally described as glorious for Turkey, both domestically and in terms of foreign policy. Its economy as well as its democratisation process thrived while externally it operated in a relatively benign environment; an environment that despite its challenges favoured TFP outwardness and its efforts to acquire a new multileveled role. Indeed, Turkey's foreign relations had known great success with many of its traditionally tough relations, such as Syria and Iran, being normalised.

The two cases explored in this study are different from each other in that they did not both have a positive development vis-à-vis TFP. Whereas Syria turned into an ally for Turkey, Israel had gradually become an enemy. Taking this into account in conjunction with the fact that Israel represents in many ways Turkey's relations with the West while Syria represents an anti-Western camp, could be helpful in extrapolating important insights about Turkish foreign policy-making dynamics.

During this period, Turkey was operating within a broader international and regional context as explained through the independent variables. The Global War on Terrorism and the Afghanistan war, the Iraq war, EU-Turkish relations, as well as the economic crisis were the four primary system-level factors which affected TFP, as analysed. At the regional level specifically, the two wars changed the balance of power (first independent variable) by weakening Iraq, empowering Iran, and giving more prominence to Iraqi Kurdistan. Consequently new threats emerged for Turkey (second independent variable) such as the US regional involvement, Kurdish separatism, Israel and to a lesser extent Iran – due to its Shiite regional networks and influence as well as its appeal to Arab states through its support of the Palestinians.

Ultimately these developments had an impact on Turkey's decisions regarding alliance formations and foreign economic relations (third independent variable), albeit with some divergence between economic and security policies in the case of Israel. Thus these independent variables necessitated a shift in TFP which after the intervening role of domestic factors shaped Turkish policies and led to close cooperation and alliance with Syria and Iran⁶⁵⁴ with the parallel adoption of an anti-American and anti-Israeli stance. Turkey's noteworthy turn to the Middle East, at the obvious expense of

⁶⁵⁴ Despite Turkey's insecurities towards Iran – its nuclear program, its regional influence and relative power, and its appeal to the Arab world – it chose to ally with it due to pragmatic and ideological reasons. In terms of the former one could cite Turkey's great energy dependency on Iran's supply, their common concern about the Kurdish separatist threat, and their historical regional hegemonic rivalry which Turkey would not want to exacerbate, not least because of the close geographic proximity between the two countries. In terms of the ideological reasons, as analysed in previous chapters, the overarching Islamic identity played a role although there were still underlying intra-religious differences (Sunni vs. Shia). This, as well as Turkey's Israel policy, is one of the decisions of Turkish foreign policy which becomes clearer when seen through an NcR lens.

its relations with the West, was favoured by other systemic factors such as the deteriorating Turkish-EU relations and the global economic crisis which affected European and Western markets. A more complete explanation about TFP behaviour can be achieved once systemic factors are correlated with domestic constraints and dynamics.

8.1.2. Turkey-Syria (2002-2011)

What follows is an examination of the causal chains that led to TFP behaviour towards Syria in terms of economic and security policies. It is worth reminding the reader that the inclusion of economic policies, in addition to security considerations and together with the examination of domestic dynamics (intervening variables), is an advantage of NcR that also differentiates it from neorealism and its strands.

The intervening variables to be considered are AKP elite ideology and domestic interest groups (i.e. business associations, opposition political parties, military elites, and public opinion).

Economic Policies

Turkey's economic relations with Syria during the 2000s boomed within the broader framework of its improved relations with the Middle East and the Arab world in particular. The signing of the free trade agreement in 2004 and the abolishment of visa requirements in 2009 were primary examples. It has already been seen that the systemic factors that pushed Turkey in the direction

of increasing relations with the Middle East and Syria, respectively. However, in the face of regional power changes and threats, Turkey's closer economic relationship and alliance with Syria represented the opposite to the will of its traditional Western allies given that Syria was an anti-Western country against which the US and European countries maintained a hard stance. In that sense the motivations of TFP should also be sought in the country's domestic scene.

In the case of economic policies in particular, it has been observed that AKP elite ideology and the role of business associations – especially the conservative ones – are intertwined. On the one hand, the elites of AKP are characterised by a (political Islamic) ideology which sees the Middle East as a post-Ottoman geo-cultural space under the potential influence of Turkey. Although this understanding of the Middle East is not necessarily Islamic, it is expressed in the particular political Islamic worldview of AKP elites as a component of the Turkish historical experience and development of Turkish political Islam. At the same time it is based on an overarching Islamic identity which transcends national boundaries and other regional identities thus establishing a historically and religiously rooted affiliation with the region and its peoples. Syria is only part of that vision. It is within this framework that PM Erdoğan and FM Davutoğlu repeatedly called the Syrians and the peoples of the Middle East, “brothers”.

On the other hand, the rise of the “Anatolian tigers” (or “Islamic capital”) which was mainly represented by conservative business associations such as MÜSIAD, played an important role in the economic orientation of the AKP's

ideological and political vision the last twenty years or so. The affiliation of the AKP with these business circles gave economic development and Turkey's foreign economic relations an ideological character. As such economic – as well as diplomatic and other – relations with the geo-cultural space of the Middle East acquired prominence, sometimes at the expense of economic relations with the West. After all, as seen, Davutoğlu highlighted the importance of the economy in TFP on a few occasions while Anatolia, from where Islamic capital originates, constitutes the backbone of the AKP's electoral constituency.



From that perspective, AKP elite ideology together with the economic needs and ideological orientation of the rising Anatolian business elite channelled the aforementioned systemic pressures in a way that resulted in a foreign policy outcome that differed from Turkey's traditional pro-Western foreign policy orientation, that is, the alliance with Syria and Iran (See, Table II).

Other domestic interest groups such as the more secular business association TÛSIAD, military elites and opposition parties did not oppose better economic relations with Syria and the region insofar as they did not challenge Turkey's relations with the West. Similarly, public opinion was receptive to improved relations with Syria not least because of the rise of anti-Americanism, the closer cultural and geographical relations with Syrians and the Arabs more generally, as well as economic growth and development due to the AKP's economic policies. In that sense, other domestic interest groups had a neutral or a positive passive role in this case.

What can be suggested is that if it were not for the ideology of the AKP elites and their politico-ideological affiliation with the rising conservative business elites the foreign policy outcome would have been different, in that, we would expect Ankara to bandwagon with the US (see Table II below). The systemic variables remain the primary drivers for a foreign policy shift, in that it was external changes and dynamics that initially called for foreign policy decisions to deal with the various challenges of the 2000s.

Lastly, the strategies employed with regard to Turkey's economic policies can be described as soft balancing. Given the fact that changes in economic policies (economic interdependence) depend largely on systemic changes (power changes), soft balancing refers to the outcome of foreign economic policies which, however, is not completely dissociated from security issues. In that sense, economic policies were a means of responding to the overall systemic changes, and specifically the results of US unilateralism in the Middle East after 2001. Soft balancing describes Turkey's foreign policies where means other than military, such as diplomacy, economy and business meetings, were used. As soft balancing is not a revisionist strategy, but rather one employed because of limitation in capabilities to alter the *status quo* and deal with greater powers, TFP behaviour in this specific sub-case study was *status quo* oriented.

Table II: Turkey-Syria: Economic Relations, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour

Systemic Drivers	Most Probable Foreign Policy Outcome under Previous Political Establishment (<i>Counterfactual</i>)		
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies		- Bandwagon with the US/West OR - Balance against threats with the US/West	
Systemic Drivers	1st Intervening Variable (AKP elite Ideology)	2nd Intervening Variable (Domestic Interest Groups)	Foreign Policy Outcome
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	 - Greater affiliation with the M.E. - Prone to revisionism in the post-Ottoman space	MÜSIAD Favoured/pushed for a M.E. opening	- Soft Balancing in dealing with systemic changes - Anti-Western selection of alliances - Defensive but more autonomous Status Quo Behaviour
System + Elite ideology + MÜSIAD pressures = Soft Balancing & <i>Status Quo</i> Behaviour			

Security Policies

For the examination of Turkey's security policy towards Syria, the role of Iran has been looked at. Specifically, the question answered was, "Has Turkey's relations with Iran played a role in bringing Turkey and Syria closer together?" As was noted, Iran is important for the analysis because it is a vital strategic ally of Syria, because of its part in the trilateral partnership with Turkey and Syria, and because it poses a major threat to Israel. With regards to the overarching

question about TFP drivers and motivations, this case facilitated the identification of TFP drivers, especially when it comes to security relations.

The systemic variables played again a primary role in the Turkish-Iranian rapprochement which started gradually in 2000 and deepened under the AKP. As AKP was not yet in power in 2000, it was clear that security concerns, most importantly the Kurdish issue, drove the betterment of relations. However, in the rest of the 2000s the relations between Turkey and Iran improved remarkably, just like the ones between Turkey and Syria. Given Western concerns about this rapprochement and the fact that Iran, together with Syria, were parts of the “axis of evil,” makes TFP decision more difficult to explain and thus calls for the need to look at the intervening variables.

It has been found that AKP elite ideology (1st intervening variable) had a twofold role. First, it replaced the Kemalist ideology which posed obstacles in improved relations between Turkey and theocratic Iran and, second, it filtered external pressures, as in every case examined, thus leading to deeper bilateral relations. Although there were obvious pragmatic considerations, such as the Kurdish threat and economic reasons, which were invoked by FM Davutoğlu as well, the ideological affinity was also clear in AKP elite statements which depicted Iran as a brotherly country. Moreover, Turkey’s practical indifference about the Western stance towards anti-Western Iran and Syria was a product of ideological considerations.

It has to be remembered that prior to the 2007 re-election of the AKP, the political manifestations of the party’s ideology were limited, due to the

dominance of the Kemalist establishment, and therefore Turkish-Iranian relations during that time were primarily based on pragmatic, security and economic, considerations. When after 2007 the AKP managed to gradually marginalise the Kemalist military and bureaucracy, relations between Turkey and Iran deepened further. This also means that the freer the AKP ideology was to manifest itself, the more assertive and confident Turkey became. In this context it was expected that, given the strong alliance between Iran and Syria, the betterment of relations between Ankara and Tehran would also advance Turkey-Syria relations.

In terms of the second intervening variable and the various domestic interest groups, it has been shown that business associations played an important part in Turkish-Iranian relations. MÜSIAD was once more a salient driving force since it saw economic relations with Iran as a priority while this could be also understood within the broader framework of MÜSIAD's support of economic relations with Islamic countries. TÜSIAD, on the other hand, appeared supportive of all economic openings for Turkey as part of a profit-driven policy and thus did not pose any obstacles to Turkish-Iranian relations; it rather supported them.

As far as the main political opposition was concerned (i.e. CHP and MHP) they supported a closer relationship with Iran despite ideological differences because the Kurdish secessionist threat was very important to them and Iran was an important ally to have in dealing with it. The BDP, as a pro-Kurdish

party, was indeed opposed to that aspect of Turkish-Iranian cooperation, but its influence and pressure was weak.

This was also the case with Kemalist military elites. Since national unity and homogeneity was one of the main ideological features of Kemalism and its primary carrier, the military-bureaucratic elites, the Kurdish issue and the threat of secessionism was one of their greatest insecurities which had to be alleviated by all means. From that perspective, for the Kemalist generals, partnership with Iran was a means to a vital end.

Lastly, Turkish public opinion did not mind Turkey's rapprochement with Iran. On the contrary, surveys showed that in mid-2000s public opinion perceived Iran as less of a threat than the US or Israel. Thus it rather favoured the AKP's decisions.


The conclusion is that better relations between Turkey and Iran had indeed played a positive role in Turkish-Syrian relations, and the causal connection remains similar to the case of Turkish-Syrian economic relations (see, Table III). The primary drivers were related to the independent variables. Security in the early 2000s, and specifically threats such as Kurdish separatism, was of great importance. This created the initial need for some sort of reactionary foreign policy. Turkey, under the previous establishment, responded by putting aside ideological differences and approaching Iran. At that point a relative balance was struck between Turkish-Iranian and Turkish-US relations.

However, in the coming years, with 2007 being the turning point, the more the AKP consolidated its power and ideological orientation the deeper its relations with Iran and Syria became – despite Western anxiety and calls for caution. To this contributed the pragmatic approach of business groups in general and the pro-Islamic world orientation of MÜSIAD in particular, while public opinion saw this turn positively. When AKP policies gradually collided more with the Kemalist establishment – military elites and opposition parties – the latter's power to adequately oppose them or change them was limited.

Lastly, TFP behaviour in this instance, through its regional balancing strategies,⁶⁵⁵ remained a *status quo* one. In addition to Turkey's soft balancing in the region, military means were also employed at times, especially when Turkey collaborated with Iran and Syria against the Kurdish threat; thus Turkey also used balancing strategies against regional threats and power changes, which are also *status quo* oriented as they attempted to maintain the regional balance and Turkey's role. At the same time, Turkey's occasional opposition or disregard of Western policies rendered it gradually more assertive and challenging to the *status quo*. This reality is more evident in the case of Turkish-Israeli relations.

⁶⁵⁵ Turkey formed an alliance with Syria and Iran mainly to balance against regional threats – primarily the Kurdish one – and factors that played an exacerbating role, such as the US and Israel.

Table III: Turkey-Syria: Security Relations, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour

Systemic Drivers	Most Probable Foreign Policy Outcome under Previous Political Establishment (<i>Counterfactual</i>)		
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bandwagon with the US/West <li align="center">OR - Balance against threats with the US/West 		
Systemic Drivers	1st Intervening Variable (AKP elite Ideology)	2nd Intervening Variable (Domestic Interest Groups)	Foreign Policy Outcome
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater affiliation with the M.E. - Prone to revisionism in the post-Ottoman space 	MÜSIAD Favoured/pushed for a M.E. opening. Pro-Iran.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Soft) Balancing against regional and international threats - Anti-Western selection of alliances - Defensive but more autonomous Status Quo Behaviour
System + Elite ideology + MÜSIAD pressures = Soft Balancing & Status Quo Behaviour			

8.1.3. Turkey-Israel (2002-2011)

The case of TFP towards Israel shows the other side of the coin. Whereas relations with Syria (and Iran) improved greatly under the AKP, relations with Israel entered a period of gradual deterioration and, eventually, turned from amity to enmity. It is important that Turkey's relations with Israel are also indicative of Turkey's relations with the US as the three countries have been maintaining a strategic alliance which has been instrumental for serving

Western interests in the Middle East. For Israel's case two questions were answered: why would Turkey under the AKP compromise its most important regional alliance? And, did Turkish-Israeli relations and Turkey's relations with non-Western or anti-Western regional allies had to be mutually exclusive?

Through the independent and intervening variables of the NcR framework economic and security policies are looked at, first by examining the gradual deterioration of bilateral relations and, second, by examining the role of Iran. TFP behaviour towards Israel is thus identified and, by extension, the similarities and differences between this case and the one of Syria.

The Deterioration of Turkish-Israeli Relations

In chapter 4 and 6 it was argued that the primary systemic factors which influenced TFP under the AKP towards Israel were: the alleviation of the common Syrian threat, the failure of the Arab-Israeli peace process in the early 2000s, the deterioration in Turkish-American relations in the aftermath of the Iraq war, and Turkey's increasing threat perception of Israel. However, it has been noted that Turkey could have maintained a more balanced stance which would not put its strategic alliance at risk. Contrary to such an approach, the AKP's Turkey became increasingly short-tempered with Israel thus leading their relations to a stalemate in 2010, after the Gaza flotilla incident.

As seen in the first intervening variable, about AKP elite ideology, Israel was seen by the AKP elites as a non-Muslim country in the region and was treated as such. In other words Turkey under the AKP related more to its Arab

and Muslim neighbours, rather than to the West or Israel, due to its political Islamic ideology. And although pragmatic incentives were at play as well, such as the need to approach the Arab world, they seemed intertwined with and surpassed by ideological considerations. In that sense ideology played a central role as it created a preference for Turkey to engage the Arab world as a response to systemic changes. From there on it followed that Turkey should distance itself from Israel to achieve that end. During the previous establishment, this would not have been the case; it is more probable that a balance would have at least been sought between Turkey's relations with Israel and the Arab world – the disagreements of Kemalist elites with the AKP's policies confirm this.

Despite the gradual deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations, one of the important things to be taken into account is that the economic relations of the two countries improved greatly throughout the 2000s. The two main business associations examined have had somewhat different approaches to the matter. On the one hand, TÜSIAD showed a more pragmatic face by embracing and promoting better relations with Israel while on the other hand, MÜSIAD maintained a rather anti-Israeli stance, in line with the AKP, although trends of Europeanization in the 2000s made it more prone to a pragmatic approach. In this context the general betterment of economic relations regardless of the worsening diplomatic relations, suggests that business circles are at least to a certain extent dissociated from politics, thus being able to put pressure on the government towards uninterrupted economic relations or simply disregard

political turmoil. At the same time the overall importance the AKP gives to economy and economic policies should not be neglected; after all, economic development and growth was one of the components of its success story.

The opposition parties and Kemalist military elites kept an overall negative stance towards the AKP's hard rhetoric and policies vis-à-vis Israel. Although they did not have the power to alter the AKP's policies,⁶⁵⁶ it has been found that their pressures along with pressures from civil society contributed to the AKP's decision to refrain from endorsing the second Gaza-bound flotilla.⁶⁵⁷ For its part, public opinion was rather supportive of the AKP's rhetoric about Israel as there were growing anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli feelings in the society, especially after Israel's attack against Gaza (2007/08) and the Gaza flotilla. However, there is no evidence to support whether public opinion was concerned with Turkish-Israeli economic relations; it seems that it was rather concerned with the salient diplomatic rivalry.

The inconsistency in Turkey's policies towards Israel is obvious: good economic relations versus bad diplomatic relations. This is not unrelated to the largely independent role of economic dynamics within the Capitalist system as mentioned in the section on economic interdependence (third independent variable). At the same time, there is something to say about the role of ideology as well. The anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli predispositions of the AKP's political Islamic ideology and its pro-economy orientation which was intertwined with

⁶⁵⁶ It is here reminded that Turkish-Israeli relations deteriorated most notably after 2008 and, therefore, at a period when the Kemalist military-bureaucratic elites were already weakened.

⁶⁵⁷ The traumatic experience of the previous Gaza flotilla should not be neglected as a discouraging factor for the endorsement of the second flotilla.

business elite interests, could provide another explanation for the contradiction in Turkey's Israel policies. It should be noted, however, that given the increasing authoritarianism of the AKP after 2007 and Erdoğan's increasing indifference of domestic pressures, it is more likely that Turkish-Israeli economic ties remain largely unaffected mostly due to the former reason, the great autonomy of business circles from politics.

This understanding is partly affirmed by Ayşe Buğra and Osman Savaşkan who present a dynamic government-business relationship where business associations should be also seen as political actors. This, together with the fact of the AKP "government's selective empowerment of business associations,"⁶⁵⁸ could also suggest that it is possible that the pro-business element of AKP elite ideology trumped any ideological hostility towards Israel. As such, the interplay between ideological and material incentives surfaces again.

To clarify the causal chain that led Turkey to maintain good economic relations with Israel, each variable needs to be attributed a causal significance (or insignificance). As NcR's theoretical assumptions suggest, the independent variables played a primary role. The primary and independent variables when filtered by domestic variables and mostly importantly the AKP elite ideology, led Turkey to its anti-Israeli stance. However, it could be argued that if the AKP ideology were the only intervening variable, Turkish-Israeli relations might have deteriorated at all levels, including economic relations. Thus the role of

⁶⁵⁸ Ayşe Buğra and Osman Savaşkan, *New Capitalism in Turkey: The Relationship between Politics, Religion and Business* (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2014). 110, 71.

business circles and the AKP's relationship with some of them prevented the ideological drivers from completely dominating policy-making. Lastly, opposition parties, military elites and the public opinion played a very limited role and ultimately had no real impact on policy-making in this instance. It is worth noting that AKP Israel policies found fruitful ground in public opinion.



As such, Turkey followed a balance of interest approach by which the cost of sacrificing its security and diplomatic relations with Israel was a small price to pay in relation to its expanding relations with the region (i.e. its endeavour to extend its values), while economic relations were not affected due to domestic constraints. At the same time it employed the revisionist strategy of subversion which sought to discredit and demoralise Israel. In this case, Turkey's revisionist behaviour lies in the fact that the AKP pursued an altered regional status.⁶⁵⁹ That is, despite the good economic relations, Turkey's already developed alliance with Syria and Iran and the interruption of its alliance with Israel signified a change to the regional balance of power with Turkey claiming the leadership of the Arab world through its support of the Palestinian cause and its opposition to Israel – an end both ideological and pragmatic.

In that sense, when Turkey's Syria policy seen compared to Turkey's Israel policy, it cannot merely be described as *status quo* since the two policies in conjunction with one another, reveal efforts of altering the regional *status quo* to

⁶⁵⁹ It should be reminded to the reader that, with regards to the Balance of Interests theory, a state's preference to pursuing something that it does not have at the expense of the *status quo*, as the case in question, points to revisionist behaviour.

Turkey's favour (see Table IV and V). More evidence of Turkey's revisionist behaviour can be found in the next section which focuses on the role of Iran.

Table IV: Turkey-Israel: Declining Relations, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour

Systemic Drivers	Most Probable Foreign Policy Outcome under Previous Political Establishment (<i>Counterfactual</i>)		
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balanced relations between Arabs and Israeli's - (sustainability of Turkish-Israeli alliance with perhaps better economic relations with Arab world) - Status Quo Behaviour 		
Systemic Drivers	1st Intervening Variable (AKP elite Ideology)	2nd Intervening Variable (Domestic Interest Groups)	Foreign Policy Outcome
International Power Changes + International Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater affiliation with the M.E. - Prone to revisionism in the post-Ottoman space 	<p>MÜSIAD-TÜSIAD</p> <p>In favour of good economic relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance of Interests (Retaining economic, sacrificing security relations) - Subversion - Revisionist Behaviour
System + Elite ideology + MÜSIAD & TÜSIAD pressures = Balance of Interest/Subversion & Revisionist Behaviour			

The Role of Iran in Turkey's Israel Policy

From previous chapters it is known that regional power changes and changing threat perceptions gave rise to a stronger relationship between Turkey and Iran, even before the AKP's rise to power and throughout its first term. It

has been seen, however, that this relationship deepened further especially after 2007 and 2008, with the marginalisation of the Kemalist military elites.

Within the context of the relatively limited manifestations of the AKP's ideology during the party's first term, security concerns stemming from threat perceptions, and secondly economic reasons, were the drivers of the Turkish-Iranian rapprochement. As noted, the ideological change made things easier and contributed to the sustainability and prolongation of the bilateral cooperation between Turkey and Iran. Once the AKP predominated over the previous Kemalist establishment it felt more convenient to follow its own foreign policy vision and thus achieved closer relations with Iran and Syria and greater distance from Israel. On the one hand, the AKP's consolidated ideology favoured deeper relations with Iran and looser relations with Israel while on the other hand the deepened Turkish-Iranian relations were perceived negatively by Israel. Thus overall, in terms of ideology, TFP towards Iran had a negative impact on Turkish-Israel relations, albeit mainly post-2008.

Business associations kept playing a role in the maintenance of Turkey's relations with Iran as an extension of the good diplomatic relations. At least as far as the business sector is concerned, it seems that economic relations with Iran were not favoured over economic relations with Israel or vice versa. Once again this points to the pragmatism of the businessmen and the role of the private economic sector which is largely dissociated from politics.

In terms of the political opposition, the CHP maintained a balanced stance vis-à-vis Iran; it did not oppose better relations with Iran, although it appeared

to be against the AKP's Israel policy. The MHP was not against good relations with Iran, despite ideological differences, mainly because of the Kurdish security threat and fears that Israel supported the PKK. The BDP welcomed Israel's help but maintained a pessimistic view as to whether Israel or Iran wanted the Kurdish issue to be resolved. Throughout the 2000s, there was a general tendency of supporting better relations with Iran but no party suggested better relations with Iran at the expense of Israel. However the analysis also leaves room to suggest that from the AKP's second term onwards, along with military elites, political opposition was not particularly influential as regards governmental policies; not only because of the AKP's consolidated power, but also because the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment had been largely neutralised.

In the same spirit, public opinion mattered for the AKP but not in its entirety. As it becomes more evident in later years, the AKP adopts a majoritarian approach to democracy by which it mostly cares about its own conservative electoral constituency.⁶⁶⁰ In this case public opinion reinforced and legitimised Turkey's policies by favouring the anti-Israeli and pro-Iranian approach.

As in the previous case of Turkey's Israel policies, the AKP demonstrates revisionist foreign policy behaviour. The changed security relations of Turkey with Israel and Iran, with Turkey clearly siding with Iran⁶⁶¹ and freezing its

⁶⁶⁰ According to the interviews and secondary literature, that is increasingly the case especially after 2010 and AKP's victory on the constitutional referendum of September 2010.

⁶⁶¹ See, e.g. Turkey's support of Iran's nuclear programme in the UN.

security and diplomatic relations with Israel are evidence of willingness for a different *status quo*. This is also evident in Turkey's ideological – and at the same time pragmatic – policy of approaching the Arab world through the support of the Palestinians and by turning against Israel. Although Turkey was always a supporter of the Palestinian cause, it never before had such close relations with the Arab world, especially not at the expense of Israel and this should be understood as result of the effect of the AKP elite ideology (balance of interests). It should also be kept in mind that Turkey was the first Muslim-majority country to recognise the Israeli state (see, Table V).



More specifically, and in line with the analysis in the previous section, after 2008, the Gaza war, and the “Mavi Marmara” incident, Turkey had in fact employed revisionist strategies towards Israel, such as subversion which tried to undermine Israel's credibility and morality by calling it, for example, a terrorist state. TFP did not display a defensive behaviour but a rather aggressive one.⁶⁶² Israel, on the other hand, seemed to be looking for ways to balance Turkey's efforts to assert itself by initiating strategic cooperation with Greece and Cyprus. The emerging alliance also had a military aspect which was supported in joint exercises by the US as well.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶² Israel's aggressiveness towards the Palestinians or the Gaza flotilla should not be neglected. However, contrary to Ankara's Israel policies, it was not directly threatening to Turkey. President of Strategy International Dr. Marios Efthymiopoulos. Interview with the author, Nicosia, Cyprus, 26 January 2013.

⁶⁶³ Andreas Stergiou, "Greece, Cyprus and Israel change the military balance in the Mediterranean," *Geopolitical Information Service*(04/12/2013), <http://www.geopolitical-info.com/en/geopolitics/greece-cyprus-and-israel-change-the-military-balance-in-the-mediterranean>.

In the next section the two cases are analysed in a comparative perspective – i.e. CC analysis. Thereby the patterns and differences in the cases of Syria and Israel for the 2002-2011 period become clear, the most important drivers of TFP are highlighted and TFP behaviour for this period determined and explained. These conclusions are later compared to the respective conclusions for the 2011-2013 period within the framework of the Cross Time analysis.

Table V: Turkey-Israel: The Role of Iran, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour

Systemic Drivers	Most Probable Foreign Policy Outcome under Previous Political Establishment (<i>Counterfactual</i>)		
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balanced relations between Iran and Israeli - Maintenance of Turkey-Israel alliance - <i>Status Quo</i> Behaviour 		
Systemic Drivers	1st Intervening Variable (AKP elite Ideology)	2nd Intervening Variable (Domestic Interest Groups)	Foreign Policy Outcome
International Power Changes + International Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater affiliation with the M.E. - Prone to revisionism in the post-Ottoman space 	MÜSIAD-TÜSIAD In favour of good economic relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance of Interests - Subversion - Revisionist Behaviour
System + Elite ideology + MÜSIAD & TÜSIAD pressures = Balance of Interests/Subversion & Revisionist Behaviour			

8.1.4. Conclusion – Cross-Case Comparison (2002-2011)

In this section the two case studies during the first period (2002-2011) are compared in order for the most important drivers of TFP to be identified and its foreign policy behaviour to be determined. In confirmation of the theoretical framework's assumption regarding the dependent variable (foreign policy behaviour), Turkey displayed variation in foreign policy outcomes vis-à-vis the two case studies. Overall, Turkey's Syria policy appeared to be *status quo* oriented, while its Israel policy revisionist.

First, it should again be made clear that systemic changes in early 2000s drove Turkey's Middle East foreign policy; particularly international and regional power changes, as well as external threat perceptions. International economic interdependencies did not always follow changes in other independent variables, as seen in the case of Israel, and this has been attributed to the role of business elites and interests as largely autonomous from diplomatic and political developments.

To further clarify the relationship between the systemic and unit levels, the reader is reminded that the intervening variables (the AKP elite ideology and domestic interests groups) did not by themselves bring about change in TFP after 2002; their role was secondary to systemic changes. Thus it is highlighted that, to begin with, in the hierarchy of foreign policy drivers systemic factors are primary and domestic factors secondary. However, analysing TFP only from the perspective of systemic factors leaves a lot of issues unexplained such as Turkey's alignment with Syria and Iran and its

disrupted relations with Israel. These were some of the issues dominating the debate which tried to comprehend and explain Ankara's moves during the 2000s.

On the other end of the spectrum, much of the discussion was indeed deterministic in that it attributed, for example, TFP re-orientation under the AKP to ideological or, more generally, ideational factors.⁶⁶⁴ Some tried to find the middle ground by citing a number of systemic and domestic factors,⁶⁶⁵ but causal chains that would explain Turkey's behaviour have not been established – as far as this author is aware. The linkage between systemic and domestic that is suggested here is one that attributes the primary role of bringing about change to systemic factors. However, domestic factors intervene and ultimately determine how the state will respond to external pressures. Therefore, the degree and character of the state's response to systemic dynamics – which may be policy change or a more moderate management – depends on domestic ideological and material interests.

As such, Turkey was led to closer relations with the Arab world and Syria and Iran in particular not merely because of systemic changes and dynamics but because that was how AKP elite ideology and some domestic interest groups thought that Turkey should operate within that particular geopolitical environment. This was also the case with respect to the decline in Turkish-Israeli relations. The interplay between the independent and intervening

⁶⁶⁴ McNamara, Cohen, and Phillips, "Countering Turkey's Strategic Shift."; Çağaptay, "Turkey's Flip".

⁶⁶⁵ Hinnebusch and Tür, "Conclusion."; Özel, "Waves, Ways and Historical Turns: Turkey's Strategic Quest."; Mufti, *Daring and Caution in Turkish Strategic Culture: Republic at Sea*; Altunışık and Martin, "Making Sense of Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East under AKP."

variables was seen in both the economic and security policies of Turkey towards Syria and Israel; and it was achieved in an effort to stray from traditional neorealist analysis by going beyond security considerations and also be inclusive of literature debates about economic issues.

In terms of Turkey's economic policies towards the two countries, a pattern can be identified. Pragmatic business interests, as expressed by MÜSIAD and TÜSIAD, prompted Turkey to a more outward economic policy of the likes of Özal's export oriented policy during the 1980s. Indeed, especially during the first two terms of the AKP, Turkey displayed a gradual preference for the Middle East and the Muslim world when it came to trade relations not least because of the rise of "Islamic capital," its close affiliation to the AKP and their preference for trade with the Muslim world. In any case, although MÜSIAD and TÜSIAD had their own preferences as to with whom Turkey should trade, they did not oppose economic openings since they are ultimately profit driven organisations.

What also becomes clear is the fact that business relations were more able to indirectly influence politics, through their economic and ideological preferences, than vice versa. This is particularly clear in the case of Israel where business elites opposed the deteriorating Turkish-Israeli relations but were able to maintain good trade relations with Israel despite of them. They were not affected by the diplomatic crisis while they also tried to limit the damage in the relations of the two countries.

In any discussion about Turkish policies from the AKP's second term onwards, the gradual neutralisation of Kemalist military, bureaucratic and, by extension, political elites, is significant. On the one hand it rendered them unable to effectively oppose the AKP or influence policy-making while on the other hand it enabled the AKP to further consolidate its power and thus become more authoritarian. As a result, decision-making by 2011 revolved largely around PM Erdoğan in particular. Generally, the opposition parties and military elites, had little to no role to play throughout the 2000s; indeed, even when the AKP's policies became more concerning for the Kemalist establishment (e.g. bad relations with Israel and deeper relations with Iran and Syria), they were unable to react effectively.

Turkey's security policy shows the importance of systemic factors in conjunction with the AKP elite ideology as well. By taking into account the role of Iran in Turkey's relations with both Syria and Israel it becomes clear that it had a different effect in each case. Turkey's choice to align with Syria and Iran over maintaining its strategic alliance with Israel and balanced relations with the US, points to an overall strategy to assert itself in the region and bring about a different regional order in which Israel and American influence would be marginalised and Turkey would emerge as a leader among more closely affiliated Arab and Muslim states.

Thus, despite the fact that in the case of Syria Turkey's economic and security policies are *status quo* oriented and characterised by defensive strategies such as soft balancing and balancing, it occurs that in conjunction

with Turkey's Israel policies Turkey aimed for a different regional status which would be favourable to itself, especially if seen through the lens of the AKP elite worldview.

Based on the above and the comparison of the two case studies, it has been determined that the overall foreign policy of Turkey towards the Middle East during the 2000s was revisionist despite variation in foreign policy behaviour towards the two cases. After all, that was one of the purposes of this thesis which could only be achieved through comparative analysis: to produce at least some generalizable conclusions in terms of TFP towards the Middle East under the AKP. In the existing literature, there are works arguing that TFP is revisionist⁶⁶⁶ but most of them are of limited scope and more often than not lack a comparative perspective. Therefore, not only can their conclusions not be generalised but they also miss much of the complexity of why and when Turkey is revisionist, thus presenting a rather simplistic view of TFP (revisionist) behaviour.

The other, and indeed overarching, purpose was to clearly identify the drivers of TFP towards the Middle East under the AKP as well as the combinations of drivers that lead to different foreign policy behaviours. If the

⁶⁶⁶ For studies seeking to determine TFP behaviour, see for example, Nora Fisher Onar, "Neo Ottomanism, Historical Legacies and Turkish Foreign Policy," *Centre for Economics and Foreign Policy Studies* Discussion Paper Series, no. 2009/03 (October, 2009); İhsan Dağı, "Why is Turkey Going Revisionist?," *Today's Zaman* (25,08,2013), http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/ihsan-dagi_324503_why-is-turkey-going-revisionist.html; Murinson, "Turkish Foreign Policy in the 21st Century."; Constantinides, "Νέο-Οθωμανισμός: Έννοια Κλειδί για την Κατανόηση της Σημερινής Τουρκίας [Neo-Ottomanism: A Key Concept for Understanding Today's Turkey]."; Ozden Zeynep Oktav, ed. *Turkey in the 21st Century: Quest for a New Foreign Policy* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Litsas, "Bandwagoning for Profit and Turkey: Alliance Formations and Volatility in the Middle East," 125-39; Cornell, "What Drives Turkish Foreign Policy?."

causal chains for each case study (see below) are taken into account the first thing to be noted is the independent and primary role of systemic variables (underlined in the chains). AKP elite ideology has a secondary role which is always at play as the dominant ideology of Turkey's political establishment, especially from the party's second term onwards. Yet it has to be noted that although the ideology remains the same, the foreign policy outcomes produced in each case after its intervening role are different since the respective countries have a different place in the AKP elite ideology and worldview.

From that perspective and given the limited role (neutral, supportive or marginalised) of other domestic interest groups, AKP elite ideology emerges as the most important intervening variable, at least in this period; one that plays a key role in filtering systemic dynamics and leading to the foreign policy outcome (dependent variable) each time.

Business groups had a secondary intervening role mainly by pushing for increasing economic relations in general and with the Arab/Muslim world in particular (MÜSIAD). This was in line with the great emphasis the AKP gave on economic policies and relations which were largely driven by conservative business elites since they were part of the rising political Islamic movement out of which the AKP emerged and the two were thus closely affiliated socially, politically and ideologically. However, both business associations proved more pragmatic than the AKP. On the one hand they favoured, supported and drove the better relations with Arab neighbours and Iran while on the other, they resisted the deterioration of Turkish-Israeli relations at all levels, most notably

the economic. Just like they were able to bring Turkey closer to the region with regard to economic and trade relations, they were also able to maintain good trade relations with Israel in the midst of the diplomatic crisis.

This means two things. First, that the autonomy of business associations allowed them to maintain their profitable businesses. And second, that although the AKP may be open to pressures on issues that it is already predisposed to accept (such as better relations with the Middle East), it is not willing to allow (private) economic interests to intervene in political decisions and diplomatic relations. That is why, whereas trade between the two countries remained largely unaffected, with the AKP's contribution (approach and policies) as well, pressures from business elites did not manage to contain the diplomatic crisis between Turkey and Israel.

Table VI: Causal Chains in Comparative Perspective (2002-2011)

<p>Syria (economic policies): <i>System</i> + <i>Elite ideology</i> + <i>MÜSIAD pressures</i> = <i>Soft Balancing & Status Quo Behaviour</i></p> <p>Syria (Iran/security policies): <i>System</i> + <i>Elite ideology</i> + <i>MÜSIAD pressures</i> = <i>Soft Balancing/Balancing & Status Quo Behaviour</i></p>
<p>Israel (deteriorating relations): <i>System</i> + <i>Elite ideology</i> + <i>MÜSIAD & TÜSIAD pressures</i> = <i>Balance of Interest/Subversion & Revisionist Behaviour</i></p> <p>Israel (Iran/security policies): <i>System</i> + <i>Elite ideology</i> + <i>MÜSIAD & TÜSIAD pressures</i> = <i>Balance of Interests/Subversion & Revisionist Behaviour</i></p>

From the above it occurs that the only driver which leads to revisionist foreign policy behaviour is the one already predisposed towards revisionism, i.e. AKP elite ideology. Indeed, although the analysis of different cases might

show a different outcome, the overall foreign policy of Turkey cannot be understood through isolated cases; one of the advantages of the comparative analysis is that it sheds light on the bigger picture. From this perspective, TFP was revisionist as it fit Morgenthau's definition that revisionism is "a policy which aims at the overthrow of the status quo, at the reversal of the power relations between two or more nations."⁶⁶⁷

Moreover, it also fits the third goal of revisionism set by Morgenthau, that is, localised preponderance of power;⁶⁶⁸ this can also be associated with the AKP's vision for the region and the role it sees Turkey having as a leading power. Importantly, Israel is another regional power, though non-Muslim, which constitutes a power competitor for Turkey. As such, Turkey's overall Middle Eastern foreign policy, its role as a "prime mover of alliance behaviour"⁶⁶⁹ in the region with anti-Israeli and anti-Western actors, and the specific strategies it has employed towards Israel, also suggest revisionist behaviour.

Lastly, whatever the systemic changes, Turkey's eventual foreign policy outcome depends on their filtering by the dominant political ideology. Because Turkey's dominant (elite) ideology under the AKP has been revisionist, as elaborated from the beginning, the outcome tends to be revisionist unless constrained by other domestic or systemic factors. Examples from the 2011-2013 period provide further evidence for this claim. In line with one of the initial

⁶⁶⁷ Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*: 27.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid., 36-38.

⁶⁶⁹ Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit," 105.

propositions of this thesis, it can also be suggested that AKP elite ideology leads to revisionism primarily when triggered by system-level changes. In the absence of such changes, it has not been observed that the AKP elite ideology leads to revisionism though the possibility cannot be excluded. What is more likely is that systemic changes provide the opportunity – not only the trigger – for revisionist tendencies to be expressed.

The next section follows the same methodology in the CC comparison of TFP towards Syria and Israel for the 2011-2013 period. Causal chains are once more established, foreign policy behaviour identified, and the appropriate significance is attributed to each foreign policy driver. The CC comparison findings for the two time periods are compared in the last section on Cross-Time comparison and analysis.

8.1.5. 2011-2013: System-Level and Unit-Level Variables

During the 2011-2013 period three major systemic changes influenced the foreign policy calculations of Ankara; the “Arab Spring”, the completion of the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq (2011), and the developing alliance between Israel, Cyprus, and Greece. Although the former two drivers have been considered as the most important ones, all three contributed to the changing structure of the regional and international system.

The withdrawal of US troops from Iraq widened the power vacuum in the region which emerged since the 2003 war and which the US partly filled up to 2011. Apart from exacerbated ethno-religious tensions within Iraq and between

states (e.g. Saudi Arabia and Iran), the result was a power struggle between states like Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia over who would fill this gap. The most important power poles in the region left were Turkey and Iran (as well as Saudi Arabia);⁶⁷⁰ countries such as Israel and Egypt were relatively weaker. In addition, the events of the “Arab Spring” and particularly the Syrian civil war had a significant effect on the regional balance of power because of its strategic relationship with Iran and its part in the Iran-Syria-Turkey alliance. When Turkish-Syrian relations moved from amity to enmity in late 2011, Turkey lost an important regional partner while Iran’s overall power was weakened as the sustainability of Bashar al-Assad’s regime was under threat.

The US withdrawal from Iraq, together with the largely ineffective Western management of the “Arab Spring” point to a decreasing Western role in the Middle East and a global power shift that renders the regional level more important and gives rise to regional powers as potential leaders and proxy actors of greater powers. One such case was Turkey which was favoured by these changes and acquired more prominence in American and European eyes as well as was able to seek a more autonomous role as a regional power.

The above-mentioned power changes affected Turkey’s external threat perceptions in three ways. First, Turkey and Syria saw again each other as a

⁶⁷⁰ The examination of Saudi Arabia’s role in the geopolitics of the region prior or after the “Arab Spring” is beyond the scope of this thesis. What should be noted is that it played an important role both in Iraq and post-2011 Syria, not least by fuelling, according to many, sectarian tensions. For more on this issue see, Ayoob, “The Arab Spring,” 84-97; Joshua Teitelbaum, “Saudi Arabia, Iran and America in the Wake of the Arab Spring,” *BESA Center Perspectives Paper*, no. 140 (2011); Mehran Kamrava, “The Arab Spring and the Saudi-Led Counterrevolution,” *Orbis* 56, no. 1 (2012): 96-104; Guido Steinberg, “Leading the Counter-Revolution: Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring,” *German Institute for International and Security Affairs SWP Research Paper*, no. 7 (June, 2014); F. Gregory Gause III, “Beyond Sectarianism: The New Middle East Cold War,” *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper*, no. 11 (July, 2014).

threat; second, the Kurdish issue re-emerged as a security threat because of the Syrian civil war; third, sectarian tensions in Iraq and the power struggle between Iran and Turkey increased the latter's threat perceptions towards the former two. Moreover, the exacerbated diplomatic crisis between Turkey and Israel in September, 2011, increased the threat perceptions between the two countries. Israel's response was the gradual formation and deepening of an alliance with Greece and Cyprus; in that sense the three countries balanced against a mutually perceived threat.

In turn, changes in power relations and external threat perceptions, affected Turkey's regional and economic interdependencies. For example, its trade volume with "Arab Spring" countries such as Libya decreased radically – although it improved once the civil war ended. Similarly Turkey's highly beneficial economic and trade relations with Syria were disrupted because of the friction that the civil war caused despite the fact that Ankara took a while before opposing the Assad regime, precisely to give their bilateral relations and the Syrian war a chance. At the same time that Turkey's economic and more specifically trade relations with the region declined due to the "Arab Spring", its respective relations with the EU and North American countries improved. This, along with undisrupted Turkish-Israeli economic relations point to Turkey's pragmatic approach when it comes to economic policies as well as to their importance in Turkish foreign relations.

Turkey's economic return to the West, without though abandoning the Middle East, was coupled with a similar shift in security and strategic terms.

However this change did not improve Turkish-Israeli relations – at least not until mid-2013, when they initiated negotiations – nor did it lead, for example, to a stronger commitment to the EU. These contradictions are looked at below in each case study and by examining the intervening variables in conjunction to the systemic level, Turkey's strategies and foreign policy are identified and compared to each other.

8.1.6. Turkey-Syria: Economic and Security Policies (2011-2013)

Turkish foreign policy towards Syria between 2011 and 2013 relates essentially to Turkey's response to the break out of the Syrian civil war. The place of Syria in the AKP's ideological and geo-cultural vision of the region has been analysed. The affinity that the AKP saw between Turkey and Syria could not in itself explain its eventual hostile stance against the latter. Systemic pressures and threat perceptions in conjunction with the intervening role of the AKP elite worldviews dictated that change. It should also be reminded that the AKP made a distinction between the brutal Assad regime and the Syrian "brothers"; an action that rationalised Turkey's stance so as to fit its ideological framework and reassure the Arab and domestic public opinions of its peaceful intentions and strengthen its regional image as a democracy promoter (see, chapter 7).

At the same time the AKP's rhetoric on Syria included references to the Ottoman Empire and Turkey's leading role in the Middle East; evidence of the AKP's (revisionist) aspirations. Yet these aspirations remained only at the

rhetoric level as they were constrained by other domestic factors, as seen below. Although the analysis provided explanations for both the shift in Turkey's policy towards Syria from amity to enmity and the non-involvement of Turkey despite its belligerent proclamations, this section is concerned with the latter as that would allow for a more focused analysis and the establishment of clearer causal chains. Thus the role of elite ideology and domestic interests groups is seen from that perspective.

Fearing broader regional and domestic (economic) instability, business associations wanted to avoid a full scale war with Syria and therefore were against a military intervention by Turkey. Both MÜSIAD and TÜSIAD favoured a political solution to the problem although MÜSIAD seemed to have aspirations for political and economic involvement in a post-Assad Syria provided that the regime would be replaced by a pro-Turkey Sunni (e.g. Muslim Brotherhood) one. Although it is not clear whether the AKP took these particular calls for caution into account, it was rather the overall anti-war domestic environment that prevented it from more confrontation.

In this context all major opposition parties (CHP, MHP and BDP) were also against the AKP's Syria policy and its conflictual tendencies. Their criticism was harsh and in line with public opinion surveys that showed widespread opposition to any Turkey-driven escalation to the crisis and war with Syria. The latter, that is, the role of public opinion, is considered the most important of the domestic drivers in this instance. If one takes into account the fact that the AKP did not hesitate to escalate the crisis with Israel, it is clear that the only factor

that could really influence the AKP's decision-making was the public opinion – due to election considerations – as other groups were neutralised or marginalised, while the influence of business elites did not go beyond economic policies. Yet public opinion was receptive to the AKP's particular management of the crisis with Israel. Once public opinion – in addition to all other domestic groups – appeared not to be receptive of the idea of a Turkish military intervention in Syria, the AKP did not proceed according to its declarations and aspirations.

This means that although the product of the AKP elite ideology's filtering of systemic pressures (Syrian civil war) was the projection of revisionist aspirations and rhetoric, the above-mentioned domestic factors filtered these developments differently and therefore adopted a different stance. They were then factored in by the AKP government which did not carry out its threats. Evidence of Turkey's overall revisionist stance towards Syria during that time was also the policy of regime change⁶⁷¹ which was a clear attempt to alter the regional *status quo* especially if the post-Assad regime in Syria was pro-Turkey or, even better, ideologically similar to the AKP, just like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt or the conservative governments in Tunisia and Libya.

Moreover, Turkey also used other revisionist strategies such as subversion, blackmail⁶⁷² and bandwagon-for-profit as it rode “free on the

⁶⁷¹ According to Gökhan Bacık, this was the first time that Turkey adopted such a policy. Academic Dr. Gökhan Bacık. Interview with the author, Ankara, 26 September 2013

⁶⁷² Turkey used blackmail and threats of war with Syria in 1998 as well. However those are considered defensive strategies if the great threat that Syria posed to Turkey through the support of the PKK and its

offensive efforts of others to gain unearned spoils”⁶⁷³ when it turned to its traditional allies in NATO, the EU and US for help in overthrowing Assad. Lastly, Turkey’s indirect involvement (aid of opposition groups, i.e. subversion) and “willingness to manipulate events in Syria to its own purposes” was documented in a long investigative report by Seymour Hersh and a much-discussed leaked discussion between the FM, the Deputy Chief of General Staff, and the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁷⁴ It should be noted that, according to the tape, the legitimacy of which is disputed, logistical and tactical problems were mentioned as reasons Turkey did not go ahead with war plans on Syria.



Even though Turkey did not intervene in Syria, the abovementioned strategies it employed still served revisionist goals which, however, have yet to be accomplished. The table (VII) below presents the most important drivers that constrained Turkey’s military involvement in Syria. The next section looks at Turkey’s policies towards Israel during the same period (2011-2013).

militant operations within Turkey is taken into account. That behaviour is different than the use of blackmail to the revisionist aim of regime change in this instance.

⁶⁷³ Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit," 74-75, footnote no. 11.

⁶⁷⁴ Seymour M. Hersh, "The Red Line and the Rat Line," *London Review of Books* 36, no. 8 (2014): 21-24; "Leaked Turkish War Plans Against Syria," YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GhLON1HLhNs>.

Table VII: Turkey-Syria: Non-intervention, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour

Systemic Drivers	Most Probable Foreign Policy Outcome under Previous Political Establishment (<i>Counterfactual</i>)		
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bandwagon with the US/West <li align="center">OR - Blackmail (defensive) 		
Systemic Drivers	1st Intervening Variable (AKP elite Ideology)	2nd Intervening Variable (Domestic Interest Groups)	Foreign Policy Outcome
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater affiliation with the M.E. - Prone to revisionism in the post-Ottoman space 	<p>All domestic groups pressured for non-involvement</p> <p>Public opinion (most important domestic group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blackmail - Subversion - Bandwagon for profit - Regime Change - Revisionist Behaviour but not involvement
System + Elite ideology (constrained) + domestic group pressures = Blackmail/Subversion/ Bandw. for Profit/Regime Change & Revisionist Behaviour			

8.1.7. Turkey-Israel: Economic and Security Policies (2011-2013)

The analysis of TFP towards Israel for the 2011-2013 period, focuses on the further escalation in the diplomatic relations between Turkey and Israel due to the release of the UN Palmer report on the “Gaza flotilla” incident.

As noted in chapter 7, there have been identified two main reasons that could explain Turkey’s, and particularly PM Erdoğan’s, harsh and threatening stance towards Israel post-2011. The first is the AKP anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic

ideology. The second is the already mentioned balance-of-interests approach of Turkey which used its bad relations with Israel in order to develop closer relations with the Arab world. This was a pragmatic as well as an ideological approach since material interests seemed to be intertwined with ideological preferences. Given the conservative governments that came to power in the Arab world after the revolts, one could understand how regional environment was favourable to Turkey and why it tried to capitalise on it.

The role of domestic interest groups remains similar to the one they had during the 2000s, especially after 2007. That is, business groups on the one hand pressured the government not to cut off economic ties as that would harm their businesses. Some business companies had actually threatened to sue the PM for intending to disrupt Turkish-Israeli economic relations. However, even though bilateral economic relations were preserved, the influence of business groups, specifically MÜSIAD and TÜSIAD, was not able to go beyond economy and affect political relations as well. This showed that the AKP was concerned with satisfying domestic business interests insofar as it had control over politics and diplomatic relations.

In line with the latter conclusion, opposition political parties did not have any influence on the AKP's foreign policy towards Israel despite their disagreement with governmental policies and their attempted pressures. Their limited power and the AKP's increasing authoritarianism made sure of that. Lastly, public opinion, just like in the case of other crises between Turkey and Israel in the 2000s, was receptive to belligerent rhetoric and anti-Israeli

behaviour as such feelings already existed at large within Turkish society. From this perspective, the AKP's Israel policy, the cut off diplomatic ties, the imposed sanctions and the threats did not undermine public support of government, at least among its own constituency.

Overall, a number of revisionist strategies were employed by Turkey vis-à-vis Israel during that time (Table IX). Balance-of-interests was again one of them, especially in the midst of the "Arab Spring" regional changes, and Turkey's effort to upgrade its regional status and image. Subversion was also on the list as in the previous case study, while blackmail, or coercive diplomacy through sanctions and threats for naval action, was added. Moreover, as Spyridon Litsas argues in one of the few theoretical accounts of recent Turkish-Israeli relations, Turkey has tried to undermine its relations with Israel in order to improve its own status by bandwagoning-for-profit with the US. One of Litsas' conclusions is that Ankara's revisionist goal was to upgrade its value for Washington and undermine the US-Israel alliance.⁶⁷⁵

However, based on this study's findings, Turkey's efforts to soft-balance with anti-Western actors against the US; the clashing American and Turkish interests in the 2000s especially over Iraq; its social and political anti-Americanism; the AKP's ideological affinity with the Arab world and the role it played in shaping Turkey's regional policy; its efforts for greater foreign policy autonomy; the largely uninterrupted Turkish-Israeli economic relations; and, perhaps most importantly, the gradual Turkish-Israeli reconciliation process



⁶⁷⁵ Litsas, "Bandwagoning for Profit and Turkey: Alliance Formations and Volatility in the Middle East," 125-27, 36.

which started in 2013, show that Litsas' assumption is in terms of empirical evidence not entirely accurate though it may be theoretically sound. That is mainly because his interpretation does not take into account how domestic drivers (as the ones cited here) filtered system-level changes (e.g. in power relations, threat perceptions or economic interdependencies); a fact which justifies once again the selection of this thesis' theoretical framework.

As seen from the "Arab Spring" Syria case, Turkey did indeed bandwagon for profit with the US but it did so later, late 2011 to early 2012, and not to the end of undermining US-Israeli relations, but rather to exploit Western support for regime change in Syria and thus an altered regional status. As such, Turkey's behaviour in this instance has been revisionist, albeit not for reasons such as the ones cited by Litsas. The AKP elite ideology towards Israel was again the primary intervening variable which filtered systemic changes and led to the revisionist foreign policy outcome. Other domestic drivers were either not able to reverse the AKP's policy due to their marginalised or neutralised role, or supportive of AKP policies (public opinion). Lastly, it is noted that Turkey's security and economic policies were once again dissociated since despite the deteriorated bilateral relations and Ankara's revisionist behaviour, business elites managed to sustain economic relations (see, Table VIII).

The next section conducts the CC analysis for the 2011-2013 period, by comparing the conclusions and causal chains of the case studies on Syria and Israel. The next and final section deals with the Cross-Time analysis and draws the final conclusions of this chapter.

Table VIII: Turkey-Israel: 2011 Deterioration, Causality and Foreign Policy Behaviour

Systemic Drivers	Most Probable Foreign Policy Outcome under Previous Political Establishment (<i>Counterfactual</i>)		
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balanced relations between Iran and Israeli - Maintenance of Turkey-Israel alliance - Balance with Israel against “Arab Spring” challenges - <i>Status Quo</i> Behaviour 		
Systemic Drivers	1st Intervening Variable (AKP elite Ideology)	2nd Intervening Variable (Domestic Interest Groups)	Foreign Policy Outcome
International Power Changes + External Threat Perceptions + International Economic Interdependencies	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater affiliation with the M.E. - Prone to revisionism in the post-Ottoman space 	MÜSIAD/TÜSIAD (pressured for uninterrupted economic relations) CHP/MHP/BDP (Marginalised) Public opinion (receptive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blackmail - Subversion - Balance of Interests - Revisionist Behaviour
System + Elite ideology + domestic group pressures = Blackmail/Subversion/Balance of Interests & Revisionist Behaviour			

8.1.8. Cross-Case Comparison

This section compares and contrasts the cases of Syria and Israel in TFP for the 2011-2013 period. Once again the drivers behind TFP are identified and its foreign policy behaviour for this period determined. An important difference identified in TFP behaviour of this period, one that will be further analysed in the CT analysis, is the fact that it appears to be revisionist with regard to both Syria and Israel; contrary to the previous period where Turkey adopted a revisionist policy towards Israel and a *status quo* one towards Syria.

It is reminded that the division of TFP into two periods was based on changes in the primary independent variable (power relations) and therefore on the changes brought about by the “Arab Spring.” According to this thesis’ NcR theoretical framework, these (power) changes were primary in affecting the other two independent (systemic) variables at first (external threat perceptions and economic interdependence). In turn, these changes were filtered by domestic factors which intervened in the production of foreign policy outcomes and behaviour (dependent variable).

The case of Syria was examined through the lens of the AKP’s eagerness to get more involved in the country’s civil war and its eventual non-involvement directly and militarily. For the case of Israel, Turkey’s management of the 2011 deterioration of bilateral relations after the release of the UN Palmer report was analysed. In both cases the role of economic and security policies in the aforementioned foreign policy outcomes was looked at simultaneously, while the relationship between the two was also addressed.

In the midst of the “Arab Spring,” it seemed that the role of Syria and Israel in TFP became more significant than ever. In accordance with the AKP’s ideological vision for the region, Turkey tried to capitalise on the “Arab Spring” changes and emerge as a leading actor. To that end, Israel had to be marginalised both because of its non-Muslim nature and instrumental role in Turkey’s approach of the Arab world. On the other hand, the “Arab Spring” allowed Turkey to pursue a regime change policy on Syria in order to change the regional status for its own benefit, while the distinction it drew between the

Assad regime and the Syrian people fit its ideological approach of historical and brotherly relations with regional peoples.

As the dominant ideology of Turkey's political establishment, and as seen earlier, the AKP elite ideology emerges as the primary intervening variable. Its revisionist content has become even more salient as a result of the regional changes and the domestic processes of growing authoritarianism which began in the previous decade. Based on the case study analyses of this period, the AKP ideology was not merely the most important intervening variable; it was also the most powerful as it only seemed receptive or open to business groups or public opinion constraints. What is more, business groups have only been able to influence economic policy and, therefore, not high level political relations. As such, public opinion has proved to be the only domestic factor – at least of those examined in this thesis – that could constrain the AKP's revisionist aspirations.

Turkey's revisionist tendencies in this period's case were expressed through strategies such as blackmail, subversion, bandwagon-for-profit and regime change in Syria as well as blackmail, subversion and balance-of-interests in the case of Israel. It has been explained, that in the case of Syria systemic changes such as changes in regional power relations and in external threat perceptions affected Turkey's policies. Economic interdependencies were one of the most important reasons why Turkey delayed the shift in its policy but, eventually, the other two independent variables affected economic policies as well, and Turkish-Syrian relations moved from amity to enmity.

From that point onwards the AKP elite ideology's intervening role led to an offensive revisionist stance rather than a defensive one. However, it has been argued that Turkey did not go through with its threats of war against Syria mainly because of domestic concerns. Although, in this case, all domestic groups opposed the AKP's belligerent rhetoric and intensions, the highly negative public opinion has been identified as the most important factor that prevented further Turkish engagement in Syria since the party's electoral base has always been essential for its stay in power.

Similarly, in the 2011 case of Israel, political, diplomatic and security policies had deteriorated even further than in 2010 as the two countries had moved from amity to enmity as well. There, not only did public opinion not pose any obstacles to the AKP's revisionist strategies but it also favoured them. Business elites, as seen from the examination of the two business associations, refused to sacrifice their interests at the altar of political disputes and their government's offensive reaction. Their pressures as well as their autonomy at large as private capital, allowed them to retain Turkish-Israeli economic relations. As such Turkey was benefiting both economically and politically – at least in the AKP's eyes.

On the contrary, due to the global outcry and the practical difficulties that the civil war posed, economic ties between Turkey and Syria could not be preserved, while both MÜSIAD and TÜSIAD had condemned the Assad regime for its brutal practices. There was not opposition by business groups against the

disruption of all ties, only against the AKP's intension to get militarily involved in Syria as the calculated risks and costs were too high.

These are important findings and they have only been made possible because of the comparative analysis: the comparison of each case study's causal chains (see Table IX). This kind of systematic and CC comparative analysis has not only allowed for the identification of inter-level relations (systemic and unit) but also for establishing a hierarchy of significance among the different domestic and external drivers and variables.

Table IX: Causal Chains in Comparative Perspective (2011-2013)

<p><i>Syria: System + Elite ideology (constrained) + domestic group pressures = Blackmail/Subversion/Bandwagon for Profit/Regime Change & Revisionist Behaviour</i></p>
<p><i>Israel: System + Elite ideology + domestic group pressures = Blackmail/Subversion/Balance of Interests & Revisionist Behaviour</i></p>

The overall conclusion about this period's TFP behaviour is that it became revisionist in both cases. In other words, its revisionist behaviour increased without that meaning, however, that it managed to accomplish its goals. Thus, revisionism refers to the pursued goals and undertaken strategies (foreign policy outcome), not their success or failure. Moreover, this theoretical framework and methodology supports the drawing of dynamic and complex conclusions with regard to the drivers of TFP towards the Middle East, Syria and Israel in particular. No other work – at least of those reviewed or cited in this thesis – has established causal chains of TFP drivers or, more importantly,

has identified what is the causal significance of each factor. The importance of such a task lies in the fact that it provides a better understanding of the drivers that are most important in shaping TFP, or identifies the foreign policy behaviour that tends to be produced when certain drivers dominate decision-making. This, in turn, enables at least limited predictions.

As such, the contribution of this thesis to the existing literature advances the understanding of the role of each of the examined systemic and domestic factors as well as of the relationship between them. As noted in the previous chapter, it also contributes to the debate about TFP behaviour by providing a detailed answer, which is further substantiated below.

Therefore, at this point it can be said that the selection of the NcR theoretical framework was justified and served its purpose since it has helped greatly in the identification of TFP drivers under the AKP towards the Middle East which was the overarching goal of this thesis. However, in order to reach the final conclusions, according to the methods of analysis employed in this thesis, one more step remains to be made; that is, the Cross-Time (CT) comparative analysis as elaborated in the next section.

8.2. Conclusions: Cross-Time Analysis

The final and shorter section of this chapter focuses on the Cross-Time comparative analysis. Specifically, its goal is to compare and contrast the conclusions of each period's CC analysis in order to draw more generalizable conclusions about TFP drivers and behaviour, as well as to address the debate

about continuity and change in TFP, respectively. The analysis is divided into four categories, based on four theoretical parameters: the relationship between the system and unit level, between the economic and security policy sectors, the hierarchy of TFP drivers, and the relationship between revisionist and *status quo* behaviour (dependent variable). This final step of analysis will lead to a comprehensive answer in the initial question of the thesis in terms of the foreign policy-making dynamics and foreign policy behaviour under the AKP with specific regard to the Middle East (Syria and Israel).

Independent and Intervening Variables – System vs. Unit Level

The independent and intervening variables as suggested in the theoretical framework have proved valuable and instrumental in both analysing the case studies and drawing complex and specific conclusions about TFP drivers and behaviour. Importantly, the systematic analysis and (comparative) methods have led to findings that address the systemic and unit level in an integrative way as well as the relationship between the two. As well, the independent variables, and specifically the primary one (power changes), have helped in the understanding of change in TFP and in the methodological division of the case studies into two periods according to systemic changes (“Arab Spring”).

As it has been repeatedly noted, the system level and its three independent variables (international power changes, external threat perceptions, and economic interdependence) had a primary role in driving TFP. However, the inclusion of different kinds of variables (e.g. security and

economy based) has allowed, as stated from the beginning, to address the interplay between the system and unit level as well as address the relationship between Turkey's foreign security and economic policies. The latter bears a particular significance given the strong tendency in the literature by different scholars to evaluate the overall TFP on the basis of the one or the other policy sector thus being led to misapprehensions.⁶⁷⁶

Yet, the independent variables by themselves would not have been adequate in drawing such conclusions. By introducing intervening variables at the unit level, in line with the NcR theoretical framework and according to the identified debates and gaps in the literature, it has been made obvious that domestic actors play an important role in defining the final foreign policy outcomes of Turkey. In fact, without accounting for the intervening role of factors such as the AKP elite ideology or some domestic interest groups, TFP would have been very difficult to understand, as often happens in the literature.

Moreover, the integration of the two levels has not only allowed the analysis to go beyond security issues (as a classical or neo- realist analysis would do), but it also favoured the inclusion of both material and ideational factors (i.e. ideology) and therefore avoided the trap of either material or ideational determinism; another problem that has been identified in the literature at the beginning of this thesis.

⁶⁷⁶ Hasan Kösebalaban, "Turkey and the New Middle East: Between Liberalism and Realism," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* XVI, no. 3 (2011): 93-114; Tarık Oğuzlu, "Realism versus Liberalism in Turkish Foreign Policy: What does the Arab Spring herald?," *Ortadoğu Analiz* 5, no. 56 (2013): 39-51; Hakan Fidan, "A Work in Progress: The New Turkish Foreign Policy," *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 1 (2013): 91-96.

It has been argued that TFP is driven neither solely by ideological concerns nor by material ones. Rather, it has been elaborated that material and ideological interests are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Economic development, for example, or neoliberal accumulation of capital and general power increase, does not necessarily contradict the AKP elite ideology; in fact many argue that the AKP expresses an “Islamic” version of neoliberalism.⁶⁷⁷ However, the AKP elite ideology plays a primary domestic role in filtering systemic pressures, material concerns and interests, through its own lens. Thus it orientates or re-orientates Turkey towards a foreign policy path through which those interests would be served in accordance to the party’s particular ideological vision as analysed in the section about the AKP’s political Islamic ideology.

In what follows, specific attention is first paid to the economy versus security nexus. The above-mentioned observations regarding the levels and variables of analysis, together with the observations about Turkey’s security and economic policies, are employed in the last section of this chapter which seeks to analyse the variation in TFP behaviour as well as Turkey’s overall foreign policy behaviour towards the Middle East under the AKP, through a CT comparison.

⁶⁷⁷ Moudouros, "The 'harmonization' of Islam with the Neoliberal Transformation. The Case of Turkey."; Atasoy, *Islam's Marriage with Neoliberalism*; Hale and Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP*.

There were two main reasons why these two kinds of Turkish policies (economic and security) were explored in this thesis. First, there was the need to relax the traditional neorealist approach within the framework of NcR as security alone could not explain TFP, not least because much of the literature takes into account the economic aspect of Turkey's external relations as well. Second, the analysis of security policies would be able to address issues brought up by mostly realist literature, while economic policies would similarly address more economy-related analyses and particularly liberalist approaches.

Security concerns have been mostly seen through the prism of AKP elite ideology in conjunction with the second independent variable (external threat perceptions) which is, however, affected by changes in the first and primary independent variable (international power changes). Economic interests have been associated with the interests of business elites (as expressed through MÜSIAD and TÜSIAD) in conjunction with the third independent variable (economic interdependence). The examination of these independent and intervening variables for the 2002-2011 and 2011-2013 periods showed the role that each one played in TFP as well as their respective significance.

As the hierarchy of the independent variables shows, security has been more important than economy. Moreover, changes in security concerns and threat perceptions tend to affect Turkey's international economic interdependencies, albeit not always. During the first period (2002-2011), as changes in the international and regional power relations led Turkey closer to

the Middle East, stronger economic ties with this region were also established. Both AKP elite ideology, which favoured closer relations with its neighbours, and business interests, played their own role.

This was especially the case with the conservative business association, MÜSIAD, the interests and ideology of which were largely intertwined with those of the AKP, and that pushed for better relations with the region. The more secular business association of TÜSIAD as well as political opposition parties and public opinion, were open to better economic relations with the region. As such, material and ideological interests were interconnected; they filtered structural power and security changes thus leading to Turkey's so called new foreign policy with a focus on the Middle East.

Throughout the decade, it seemed that Turkey's overall foreign policy in the region was in line with business and economic interests, while other domestic groups did not seem to have a problem with Ankara's outward economic policies. However, domestic developments, notably in 2007 and 2010 as analysed, resulted in a gradually more authoritarian stance by the AKP which paid little to no attention to pressures from other domestic groups, apart from public opinion, and somewhat less attention to business associations. This strengthened the filtering role of the AKP ideology and therefore pushed for more ideological driven policies – e.g. better relations with Iran and Syria, and worse relations with Israel.

Security policies had again surpassed economic ones in the sense that political relations were mainly based on the former, not the latter. That is,

economic interdependencies, such as the one with Israel, did not prevent the disruption of diplomatic relations. In contrast, it seemed that developments in security or political relations were more likely to go forward or be prevented depending on the support or disapproval of public opinion, respectively.

The same pattern can be seen in the 2011-2013 period. Despite flourishing economic and specifically trade relations between Turkey and Israel, diplomatic and security relations deteriorated even further than in 2010. On the one hand, this highlights the primacy of security policies in TFP while on the other hand, it shows the ability of business groups to influence economic policies as well as their relative autonomy from political developments, as noted repeatedly. Security has emerged as the most important issue in the 2011-2013 case of Syria as well. Although the strong economic (and other) interdependence between Turkey and Syria was the main reason behind Turkey's delay to turn against the Assad regime, Turkey eventually adopted one of the harshest stances seen vis-à-vis the Syrian civil war. It did so due to the irreversible point that the civil war reached and all the issues that this entailed. It was a mixture of rising security concerns and ideological incentives such as "democracy promotion" (i.e. regime change) and everything that came with it (see, chapter 7). In other words, Turkey's democracy promotion mainly served as a communicative or populist strategy which was directed towards the Arab world and domestic public opinion.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁸ Although in late 2014 these attitudes may have changed due to the rise of the so called "Islamic State" (or Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham) and the role the Assad regime played in fighting them, polls between 2011 and 2013 show a clear tendency in favour of regime change in Syria. In 2011 most poll

If, therefore, security is the primary concern of TFP, though veiled under the AKP elite ideology, it then follows that economy, and specifically (neo)liberal philosophy, is *not* the primary driving force behind TFP towards the Middle East as has been claimed in part of the literature.⁶⁷⁹ However, this should not distract from the fact that generally the AKP has paid a lot of attention to economic growth and development as well as to external economic relations specifically with the Middle East.

Overall, the discussion about Turkey's security and economic policies has shown what kinds of interests are more important and in that sense helped in the establishment of a hierarchy in which economic interests are secondary to security and also largely independent within the framework of a liberalised and decentralised domestic and global economy. The different external and domestic drivers analysed were instrumental in this analysis as without accounting for the one sector or the other through the appropriate drivers (from a CC and CT comparative perspective) it would not be possible to address this relationship and establish a hierarchy.

respondents were against the Syrian government and believed that Turkey was playing a positive role (Arab American Institute Foundation poll). In a 2012/2013 survey these attitudes were not much different as 77% of the respondents still wanted regime change in Syria and 66% thought it was possible (Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies poll). In fact, it has also been reported that, by extension, Iran's image in the Arab world has also been harmed because of its support for Assad's regime in Syria. See, "Arab Attitudes Toward Syria: 2011," *Arab American Institute* (2011): 3-4; "The ACRPS Announces the Results of the 2012/2013 Arab Opinion Index," *Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies* (June, 2013), <http://english.dohainstitute.org/content/af5000b3-46c7-45bb-b431-28b2de8b33c7>; Barbara Slavin, "Poll: Sectarianism, Syria Drive Negative Image of Iran," *Al-Monitor* (05/03/2013), <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/03/zogby-poll-negative-arab-attitudes-iran-syria.html#>.

⁶⁷⁹ E.g., Habibi and Walker, "What Is Driving Turkey's Reengagement with the Arab World?"; Kutlay, "Economy as the 'Practical Hand' of 'New Turkish Foreign Policy': A Political Economy Explanation."

Before looking at TFP behaviour and issues of continuity and change, the external and domestic drivers that have been analysed throughout the thesis in the form of (independent and intervening) variables are here summarised in brief and put into a hierarchical order (see, Figure III).

Firstly, the systemic variables have an overall primary role in impacting TFP. However, the primary independent variable is international power changes. Therefore changes in international power relations affect the second independent variable in the hierarchy which is external threat perceptions. In turn, international economic interdependence, which is the third intervening variable, undergoes change, albeit not always due to the fact that economic interests and therefore policies are to a great extent dissociated from other diplomatic and security changes.

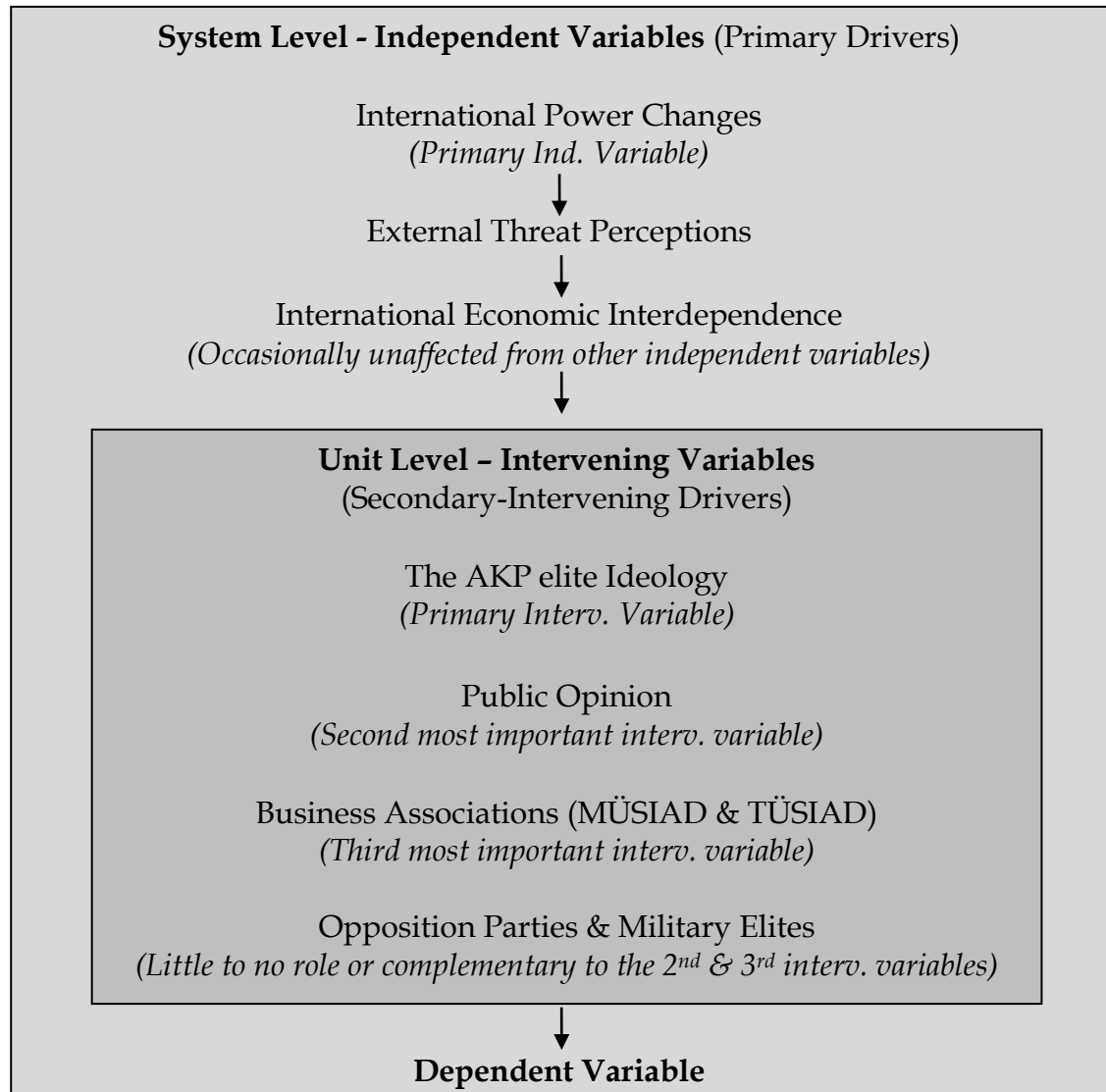
At the unit level, it has been determined that the AKP elite ideology is the most important and therefore the primary intervening variable that plays a key role in the foreign policy outcome. The second most important intervening variable was public opinion as it was the only one able to constrain TFP; similarly, the AKP was able to pursue certain policies with ease only when public opinion was supportive of or not against them. The next domestic variable in line is the one of business associations (specifically, MÜSIAD and TÜSIAD) since they have emerged as able to greatly influence Turkey's economic policies (yet not politics *per se*), despite political instability, and thus render Turkey's external economic relations largely autonomous.

Opposition parties (CHP, MHP, and BDP) as well as Kemalist military elites are at the bottom of the hierarchy of foreign policy drivers as they have played a limited or no role. That was not because they did not oppose or not try to pressure the government, but because their efforts were not successful. What can be said, however, is that during the first years of the AKP's governance, the still powerful Kemalist opposition (both the military elites and the political parties, especially the CHP) was one of the reasons why, the AKP was relatively moderate domestically and externally in relation to its post-2007 domestic and foreign policy behaviour.

Lastly, there are some links between independent and intervening variables that should be mentioned. That is, causal links between drivers that mainly have to do with specific policy sectors. First, the first and second independent variables are mostly associated with the primary intervening variable (the AKP elite ideology) as well as with the public opinion. If for example changes occur in power relations and threat perceptions, the AKP elite ideology would be the primary filtering variable at the unit level which would determine the response of TFP, unless public opinion opposes the AKP's intentions. Similarly, economic interdependence is linked to the interests of business associations, as well as to the AKP elite ideology. The political and military opposition is concerned with all these issues but, as noted, it has limited role in Turkish foreign policy-making.

The analysis now turns to the final section and the dependent variable which concerns primarily TFP outcomes and behaviour as well as patterns of continuity and change.

Figure III: Hierarchy of Turkey's Foreign Policy Drivers



Revisionism vs. Status Quo – Continuity and Change

The final comparison that needs to be made is between TFP behaviour in different periods. This Cross-Time comparison of foreign policy behaviour draws upon the results of the Cross-Case comparative analysis for the two

periods in question, respectively (2002-2011 and 2011-2013). Thereby Turkey's overall foreign policy behaviour is evaluated in conjunction with a discussion about continuity and change. In other words, variation in TFP behaviour across time cannot be dissociated from questions about continuity and change, despite the role of different external and domestic drivers.

As concluded in the CC analysis of both periods, TFP behaviour has been revisionist in both cases. Although during the 2002-2011 period Turkey maintained a *status quo* behaviour towards Syria, it has been deducted that due to its revisionist Israel policies and its overall projected revisionist aspirations, TFP behaviour was revisionist. Between 2011 and 2013 this became even clearer since Turkey adopted revisionist behaviour towards both Syria and Israel. The primary reasons for Turkey's change towards Syria in particular, were the systemic changes brought about by the "Arab Spring" and, by extension, the Syrian civil war.

Although TFP has been overall revisionist, its employed strategies during the first period, as opposed to those of the second period, point to a less hostile stance and more peaceful relations with the region; Israel was perhaps the exception. In both cases the revisionist AKP elite ideology played an important role in responding to systemic changes in a revisionist way. However, TFP behaviour would be better understood if the systemic context of each period was looked at. In this regard the regional and international structure of the system is significant in understanding how revisionism was enabled or constrained.

As Lesser notes about the first period,

'Zero problems with neighbors' may have been a self-defined caricature, but it has been a reasonably accurate description of the benign regional environment facing Turkey over the last decade. This was also a highly permissive environment in economic terms, encouraging a significant expansion of Turkey's commercial ties with Middle Eastern and Eurasian neighbors, including Syria, Iraq, Iran, the Gulf Cooperation Council states, and above all, Russia.⁶⁸⁰

Turkey's closer ties with the region were not only part of the revisionist vision of the AKP elite ideology nor were they merely driven by the interplay between systemic pressures and intervening elite ideas. They were also permitted by a relatively benign environment in which the most important problem was the issue of Iraq over which Turkey and the US disagreed and saw their relationship deteriorating. This environment with its limited problems allowed Turkey to build up a regional anti-Western alliance, it allowed it to adopt anti-Western policies and soft balance against the US. It also allowed it to strongly oppose and challenge Israel as its ideology and affiliated material interests dictated.

In other words, Turkey's external environment after 2002 helped it to set in motion its vision for the region mainly without having to use offensive strategies, apart from the case of Israel. The case of Israel underpins this point as it was the only state in the region that really posed an obstacle to the AKP's

⁶⁸⁰ Lesser, "Turkey's Third Wave," 2.

vision of an integrated Middle East under Turkish leadership, both because of its high power status and its non-Muslim nature. Thus, it had to be confronted.

After 2011, the systemic context was different. When the “Arab Spring” broke out it caught Turkey by surprise and forced it to manage a threatening environment. This process made Turkey’s revisionist intentions clearer and that is because its response to systemic changes was a matter of will and choice. Its foreign policy was failing not because it changed but because the regional setting was changing. The revisionist vision of AKP elite could no longer be implemented through the same policies employed during most of the 2000s. Thus after 2011, Turkey chose to adopt more revisionist strategies in order to be able to implement the AKP elite ideological vision. As such it declared that it would lead the change in the Middle East, it pursued regime change in Syria and became even more hostile towards Israel. The AKP’s goals could no longer be pursued with relatively benign strategies; more drastic strategies had to be followed for the achievement of a different regional status, one that would be more favouring to Turkey.

In addition, Turkey amidst such regional instability realised that it could not bring about the change it wanted by itself without facing a backlash of high security risks (e.g. Kurdish separatism) and thus tried to capitalise its relationship with the US and NATO. It was then that Turkey bandwagoned for profit with the US in its effort to overthrow the Assad regime. As said earlier, Turkey’s “Arab Spring” revisionist behaviour (which is in itself an important finding) reaffirms its revisionist tendencies during the first period as well, and

this observation is an advantage provided by the CT analysis. Moreover, it has to be remembered that Turkey's increasing revisionist behaviour can be also attributed to the gradually consolidated and dominating power and ideology of the AKP. The more powerful and autonomous it became, the more it projected and employed revisionist aspirations and strategies, respectively.

At this point an observation needs to be made about the role of the AKP elite ideology in order to address another one of the initial goals of this thesis which was to identify the extent to which TFP is driven by material or ideational motivations. To begin with, this thesis has argued that material systemic pressures are the primary drivers. However it has also been argued that these material interests are seen and filtered through the prism of the AKP elite ideology and therefore the two are intertwined. As made clear by now, an ideology exists at the elite level and that is political Islamism. It also plays a primary domestic role towards the formation of foreign policy outcomes. However, this ideology is not always able to influence policy-making, it is not always able to respond to systemic changes in the way that it would like. That is because it is occasionally constrained by domestic factors such as public opinion and business elites or system-level factors.

Generally, the AKP displayed a continuity in its revisionist aspirations, albeit they became more vocal and confidently pursued after its second election to power. The change therefore does not lie in aspirations or goals but in the employed strategies. And the employed strategies changed into a more offensive and confrontational form in accordance to changes in the independent

variables. This is again a reaffirmation of the initial assumption that change is primarily prompted by systemic changes.

With regard to continuity and change in TFP before and after the AKP's election to power, the comments that can be made for the pre-AKP foreign policy of Turkey towards Syria are limited as they have not been examined in detail. In that sense the overall goals of previous governments are difficult to be compared with the ones of the AKP. If however the widespread argument that Turkey has diachronically pursued to become a regional power is considered, it could be argued that there is a great degree of continuity.

Yet, apart from exceptions of conservative governments or coalitions in Turkey's history, Kemalist governments did not aspire to a geo-culturally integrated region with Turkey as its leader. Their vision was rather based on material power capabilities. On the contrary, it could be argued that the AKP's aspirations are more concurrent with a role that involved power elements other than material capabilities; mostly resembling a hegemonic role – one that this thesis does not comprehensively account for.⁶⁸¹ Moreover, Kemalists were known for their isolationist and *status quo* orientation; they rarely decided to challenge the *status quo* and those attempts are still debated today.

Lastly, it should be mentioned that the AKP's revisionist efforts have not been particularly successful. Turkey's status and role has improved but it has rather been driven by and reacting to changes than been able to influence the developments and the regional status or distribution of power. Revisionist

⁶⁸¹ Mufti, "A Little America: The Emergence of Turkish Hegemony."

efforts were made, strategies employed and ideas expressed but revisionist goals in the Middle East have not been achieved, at least not yet. This has at least partly to do with the fact that such revisionist efforts are not well-received in the region (e.g. from Israel, Iran or Egypt) and, among other things, produce political and diplomatic resistance. As well, it is important that Turkey's revisionist aspirations did not entirely decouple Turkey from the West. It is still an EU candidate member-state, a US ally, and a NATO member despite occasional tensions or anti-Western Turkish rhetoric and policies.

The implications of these findings about Turkey's broader foreign policy orientation and particularly its relations with the West are addressed in the concluding chapter along with a discussion about this thesis' theoretical and empirical strengths and limitations, and suggestions for improvements and further research.

9. Conclusions

Having as a starting point Turkey's much debated foreign policy, this thesis sought to address the central and overarching question, what are the foreign policy-making dynamics under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) – with specific reference to the Middle East? To that end it reviewed important works in the literature on TFP and found gaps which concern the ideational-material drivers, security-economic policies, and the system-unit level nexus. In order for these issues to be addressed, a NcR theoretical framework was employed which integrates both system and unit levels by introducing domestic intervening variables in addition to system-level independent variables.

The theoretical framework also covers the divide between ideational and material foreign policy drivers as it addresses both ideological (AKP elite ideology) policy-making issues as well as material ones (external power relations, domestic political and economic interests, foreign economic policies). Lastly, it allows for the analysis to go beyond traditional realism's focus on security and involve economic factors thus bridging to a certain extent realist, liberalist, and political economy approaches to TFP.

But the contribution of this theoretical framework, and ultimately of the thesis, does not only lie in its ability to integrate levels of analysis, drivers and policies; it also lies in its ability to facilitate the establishment of causal chains between systemic and domestic foreign policy drivers and correlate them with

specific foreign policy outcomes. The case study and comparative methodology also contributed to this task. Through a Cross-Case and Cross-Time comparative analysis of the case studies it has been made possible to draw conclusions about the causal weight of certain drivers as well as identify the causal chains both in each case study and in the overall TFP towards the Middle East. As such, and in addition to the findings of the comparative analysis (chapter 8), it is now possible to provide answers to the overarching question of the thesis and the sub-questions, and at the same time address the propositions that were suggested in chapter 3. The answer to the overarching question also reflects the central argument of the thesis.

What are the foreign-policy making dynamics under the AKP?

As noted throughout the main analysis of the thesis, there are both material and ideational dynamics in Turkish foreign policy-making. Building upon existing approaches to TFP and according to the NcR theoretical framework, it has been argued that system-level dynamics are primary in influencing TFP. In addition, and as initially stated in the proposed hierarchy of drivers in chapter 3, the three most important systemic drivers have been identified as being the changes in international relative power, external threat perceptions of Turkey, and the country's international economic interdependencies, in this order. The domestic drivers (AKP elite ideology and domestic interest groups) have a secondary and intervening role. In that sense, domestic drivers do not have a direct or independent impact on TFP; they

rather play the role of filtering external-systemic dynamics and changes thereby contributing to the foreign policy outcome.

It is maintained that systemic drivers compel a state to act. Although this means that TFP is propelled by changes and developments in its external environment, it does not mean that the foreign policy outcome is always the same. As the analysis of the case studies has shown, the pressures of domestic drivers have their own part to play as, for example, elites with different ideologies would deal with an external challenge in different ways. Similarly, different domestic interest groups have their own interest to secure and, depending on how democratic a political system is, they may or may not exert pressure successfully over the government towards accomplishing their own goals. This latter point was affirmed in the thesis as it occurred that domestic interest groups – and particularly business associations – had more influence when Turkey was more democratic. Once the AKP's rule took an authoritarian turn, their role was diminished. At the same time, as also proposed at the beginning, the fact that Turkey's external economic relations have been largely unaffected by political relations should be also attributed to the liberalisation and decentralisation of the state and economy.

To directly answer the initial and overarching question in accordance to the above-mentioned, it should be said that the foreign policy-making dynamics under AKP (2002-2013) have been primarily the power changes that occurred post-2003 (Iraq war) and post-2011 ("Arab Spring"). In turn, Turkey's threat perceptions were altered as well as much of its economic

interdependencies. The ideology of AKP elites is particularly noteworthy as it was the most important domestic driver; one that gradually differentiated TFP decisions from the previous Kemalist establishment. As the analysis showed, AKP elite ideology has more often than not predominated over pressures from domestic interest groups, though business associations kept some influence over economic issues; also, it can be suggested that public opinion was taken into account by the AKP, especially during the relatively few times that it expressed opposite preferences than those of the AKP.

More details about the foreign-policy making dynamics under the AKP have been provided in the case studies and the comparative analysis. To the end of providing a more complete picture of TFP, certain sub-questions are answered so as to address pivotal issues regarding TFP debated in the literature.

Is there evidence of revisionism or Islamic ideological incentives in TFP?

One of the central discussions in the literature about TFP – and one of the central arguments of this thesis – regards TFP behaviour; namely, whether it is revisionist or not. As seen in the literature review, the case for Turkey's revisionism is often intertwined with arguments about an ideologically-driven foreign policy. That is one of the main reasons this thesis sought to examine both TFP behaviour and the role of ideology. The short answer is that there is indeed evidence of Islamic ideological incentives in TFP and of revisionist tendencies.

This conclusion is based on the definitions that were given about the AKP's elite ideology and revisionism in the context of the theoretical framework. Having in mind that in general terms revisionism entails the pursuit of changed international power relations for the benefit of the country-undertaker, then the features of the political Islamic worldview of AKP elites render it revisionist. That is mainly because the vision they have for the Middle East is one where Islamic identity unites the peoples of the region under the leadership and hegemony of Turkey; a position which, according to their belief system, rightfully belongs to Turkey as the successor of the Ottoman Empire.

However, the fact that the AKP's elite ideology is revisionist does not necessarily mean that TFP is revisionist. The case study and comparative analysis have shown that whenever the circumstances – namely, amidst little to no external or domestic effective opposition – allowed AKP policy-makers to act according to their ideologically-informed rhetoric, TFP behaviour has been revisionist; this also corresponds to one of the central propositions made at the beginning of the thesis about the role of AKP elite ideology. Such behaviour was demonstrated in TFP towards both Syria and Israel, especially after 2011. On the contrary, whenever AKP was subjected to pressure from external realities, public opinion and, to a lesser extent, from business elites, it maintained a largely *status quo* foreign policy behaviour despite revisionism-prone rhetoric. It should be reminded that in this thesis foreign policy behaviour is classified as revisionist (or *status quo*) based on specific criteria that have been elaborated in the theoretical framework (see, chapter 3).

Overall, even though there is evidence of political Islamic ideological incentives in TFP and tendencies for revisionism, the thesis argues that Turkey is neither always nor primarily ideologically-driven. Moreover, although the CC and CT comparative analysis supports the argument that Turkey under AKP is more of a revisionist than a *status quo* state, it has also been made clear that revisionist and ideological tendencies can also be constrained by external and domestic material – e.g. economic, security, public opinion – considerations. This conclusion is in itself an important contribution to the debate on TFP as it determines TFP behaviour and particularises not only the role of ideology but also the extent to and the circumstances under which TFP is revisionist.

Has Turkey been promoting peace and cooperation, or have its policies created polarisation between international actors?

The next issue that needs to be addressed is Turkey's efforts for peace and cooperation; that is, the other side of the debate on TFP which maintains that Turkey under AKP has been a promoter of peace, cooperation and stability, in a rather neoliberal sense. Such arguments could easily be made especially during the first two terms of AKP in office, roughly up to 2011. Indeed Turkey tried to play the role of a regional mediator, a facilitator of peace. The AKP's enhanced economic and trade relations with the region and specifically the Arab and Muslim world, have been a remarkable and noticeable achievement as well; one that brought Turkey closer to its neighbours than ever before.

But while Turkey was building up better relations with the Middle East, it paid less attention to the West. As such, Turkey may have tried to promote peace and cooperation in the region but, ultimately, it did not manage to play a successful mediating role between the Middle East and the West. It rather sided with Iran on the issue of its nuclear program and with the Palestinians (and the Arab World) at the expense of its relations with Israel and the West. Instead of acting as a bridge between East and West, as Turkish politicians often argued and Western politicians wished, it contributed to the tensions between the two sides.

This thesis argues that after 2011 and the beginning of the Arab uprisings, regional instability and power changes forced Turkey to seek Western support once again, particularly in the case of Syria's civil war. This policy of double standards – which is not uncommon among states of the international system – caused problems for Turkey and further destabilised the region. One such example is the shift in Iranian policy towards Turkey due to the latter's pro-Western stance on Syria. The realities of the "Arab Spring" revealed Turkey's limitations since its ability to act as a regional promoter of peace and cooperation was hindered by its attachment to its own self-interests that led it to turn against countries such as Israel, Syria, Iraq, and later Egypt.

In other words, it was Turkey's revisionist tendencies and employed strategies, as analysed in this thesis, which brought it at odds with regional and international actors, despite the signs and evidence of partial cooperation at the regional level during the first years of its governance. While this sheds some

light on the discussion about Turkey's peace-promoting role, it does not clarify whether Turkey is leaving the West or not.

Is Turkey turning away from its traditional Western allies?

When it comes to evaluating Turkey's relationship with the West, one thing should be acknowledged first: Turkey has neither officially abandoned its EU candidacy nor has it left NATO, or any other Western organisation. At the very least, this indicates a certain degree of commitment with regard to its relations with its traditional Western partners. And yet there has been much suspicion in the US and Europe about TFP orientation since the early 2000s. Its opposing stance during the 2003 US-led invasion into Iraq and its increasing focus on the Middle East gave rise to an ongoing and heated debate about whether Turkey was "leaving the West" or not.

This thesis found that Turkey turned to its own region because of how the AKP elite understood and chose to react to systemic developments (e.g. Iraq war). As explained before, this is primarily a product of systemic pressures and secondarily a product of the ideology of the policy-making elites. Within this context, Turkey often either ignored or disregarded Western, and particularly American, policies. Moreover, it threatened to abandon its EU candidacy for a membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and made a number of provocative statements against the EU and Western policies.

As noted, the AKP's rhetoric on this issue was more linked to its policies during the pre-"Arab Spring" period; a period which favoured, relatively

speaking, TFP and which was characterised by a fairly benign geopolitical environment. It should be added that such declarations by the AKP correlates with its political Islamic ideology as defined in this thesis. Yet, as the regional and international systemic context began to change with the “Arab Spring,” Turkey’s policies became more dissociated from its rhetoric. Its proclamations that signified a more autonomous and independent role from the West were mitigated by its rapprochement with the US, NATO, and the EU in the security as well as in the economic sector, as the case studies have shown.

Hard evidence point to the fact that Turkey has not turned away from its Western allies, not least because it cannot do so; that is, it would be very difficult for Turkey to deal with international security and economic realities, especially in such a volatile region, without the support of these partners. However, this does not mean that Turkey would not like to be more autonomous or to acquire a leading role in shaping the power and other dynamics of the region. It has made that clear both through policies and rhetoric.

In this light, identifying the AKP’s aspirations in terms of its foreign policy is important for analysing today’s Turkey and estimating or evaluating its future decisions. Thus, one of the policy-relevant accomplishments of this thesis, is the suggestion that, provided the right circumstances (e.g. relative regional stability and strong economic relations), the AKP’s Turkey would seek as autonomous a role as possible, which would most probably be independent from or even opposite to Western interests in the region. This assumption is

based not only on the aspirations stemming from the AKP's elite ideology but also on the record of TFP as analysed in the previous chapters.

Limitations and suggestions for further research

Just like every study, this one has its own limitations and weaknesses. And although one of the central aims of the thesis was to reconcile and integrate different approaches to TFP, a theoretical framework could never account for every aspect of a country's foreign policy. Moreover, apart from theoretical limitations, there have also been methodological and empirical limitations.

As stated in the introduction and methodology of the thesis, the social and political turmoil Turkey was experiencing during the time of the research rendered the conduct of interviews difficult both because Turkish politicians were harder to reach and more reluctant to speak on sensitive issues (e.g. their ideology or particular political events) such as the ones under examination in this thesis. Although this limitation was mitigated by a number of other primary sources, the empirical aspect of the thesis would have been stronger if AKP interviewees were to provide first-hand accounts of their beliefs and own version of certain policy decisions.

Theoretically, the chosen NcR theoretical framework was adequately sound to address the problematique identified at the beginning of the thesis as well as to answer the questions that have been posed. Throughout the course of the analysis, however, certain actors and factors were identified that could not

have been accounted for by the theoretical framework but may have a role to play in TFP. First, it has been made clear that between 2002 and 2013 Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has played an increasingly central role in shaping TFP. In that sense, especially after 2007/08, the AKP elite ideology intervening variable revolved very much around Erdoğan's personality, his ideology and even psychology. To account for the role of these aspects in relation to Erdoğan, an individual-level approach is needed, at least when it comes to a certain time period and specific events – such as the 2010 and 2011 diplomatic crises with Israel; that is, an approach that could facilitate a purely ideological or political psychological analysis of the Prime Minister and his decisions.

Second, the analysis demonstrated in places that other domestic actors or groups have had a noteworthy role to play in certain instances. Whereas the selected domestic groups remain the most important ones in Turkey's political scene, at least for the most part, it seems that an examination of the influence of think tanks and research centres on policy-making might provide interesting results. This assumption occurs specifically from evidence that independent experts and researchers along with other domestic interest groups (e.g. opposition parties) played a role in preventing the AKP from endorsing a second Gaza flotilla towards breaking the naval Gaza blockade. In addition, the grassroots *Hizmet* movement of the Turkish Islamic cleric Fetullah Gülen, a former ally of the AKP which found itself increasingly at odds with PM Erdoğan especially after 2010, has become an important actor in Turkey.

Indeed, future studies of post-2010 TFP that want to take into account the country's domestic politics should include Fetullah Gülen in their analysis as well.⁶⁸²

Lastly, this thesis has not examined the AKP's cultural policies such as efforts to further Turkey's presence in the states of the region through the promotion of Turkish language, arts and Turkish studies, and the foundation of Turkey-related institutes and so on. Such an approach could potentially strengthen the argument about whether TFP is revisionist or not since, as explained in the theoretical framework, revisionist behaviour is not only expressed through military means but also through economic, cultural and other means. Moreover, looking at Turkey's cultural policies could be another way to examine the relationship between the AKP's ideology, rhetoric and policies. This aspect of TFP would also fall into the framework of the more critical body of literature on the so called "Turkish Model" and Turkish hegemony.

These aspects could be either explored independently or be integrated into a theoretical framework. Importantly, they could constitute variables of a different version of NcR and this is arguably an important advantage of this

⁶⁸² For the increasing significance of this movement see, "An Interview with Fethullah Gülen," *The Muslim World* 95(2005): 447-67; Sami Faltas, "The General, the Prime Minister and the Imam: Civil-Military Relations in Turkey Today," *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (2012): 133-43; Galip Dalay, "The Structural Roots of Turkey's Power Struggle," *The German Marshall Fund of the United States On Turkey*(04/02/2014); Fevzi Bilgin, "Corruption Scandal and Ensuring Political Crisis," *Rethink Institute Washington D.C. Rethink Brief* 03(January, 2014); Kadir Ustun and Erol Cebeci, "AK Party-Gülen Split: Political Fallout From Corruption Probe," *The SETA Foundation at Washington D.C. SETA Perspective*(January, 2014); Günter Seufert, "Is the Fethullah Gülen Move-ment Overstretching Itself?," *German Institute for International and Security Affairs SWP Research Paper* 2(January, 2014).

theoretical approach; namely, the fact that it can be adapted to the research questions and to the particularities of the phenomenon under examination.

The Turkish Foreign Policy of Tomorrow

Finally, the theoretical framework and the empirical findings of the thesis allow for some predictions with regard to TFP. First, given that systemic geopolitical changes in the early 2000s and 2011 played a primary role in shaping TFP, it can be assumed that changes in the international or regional balances of power, such as the rise of new threats or new alliances, will bring changes to the AKP's foreign policy. Within this framework, it is possible that Turkey will keep up its efforts of becoming a regional power, and leader of the Arab-Muslim world; the maintenance of a pro-Palestinian and an anti-Assad stance with regard to Syria will contribute to these efforts. At the same time, the region's volatility and instability will force Turkey to switch back and forth in its alliance with the West, whilst in terms of Israel a full reconciliation would be more possible if Israel were to improve its stance towards the Palestinians. Otherwise, economic and commercial ties⁶⁸³ will be the only thread keeping them together.

In this respect, Turkey is also likely to face a number of challenges given that its revisionist tendencies and efforts to improve its geopolitical status create reactions. Among others, one such challenge has been the reassertion of Egyptian power and Egypt's hostility towards Turkey since the anti-Morsi

⁶⁸³ Possibly even energy ties in the case that private economic interests prevail over political tensions and security considerations.

coup. Also, the Kurdish element will continue to pose a challenge both in Turkey and in neighbouring countries as long as a settlement with regard to Turkey's Kurdish issue is not reached. Relations with Iran can also prove problematic, not only because of Turkey's stance towards Syria, but also because of Iran's nuclear program. Another challenge would be the negative relations with Israel especially given the latter's multileveled partnership with Cyprus and Greece and the natural resources dispute in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Second, as long as the AKP remains in power and seeks to solidify its control over the state and society at the expense of democratic consolidation, TFP will maintain revisionist tendencies. Similarly, if geopolitical or domestic socio-political turbulence leads to a change in government and the rise of a pro-Kemalist party, TFP will likely change and once again become more *status quo* oriented.⁶⁸⁴ However, in that case it would be also likely to observe more willingness from the government's part to maintain in some degree the AKP's enhanced relations with the Arab world; not only for economic benefits but also for public opinion purposes. In this scenario, the public's anti-Israeli, anti-Western, and pro-Arab tendencies might lead Kemalist elites to an ideological and thus political transformation as well.

Third, Turkey's external economic interdependencies will continue to be largely independent from its diplomatic or security relations. It is thus very

⁶⁸⁴ Other kinds of government are not likely to emerge in the near future, apart from the scenario of a broader coalition government which will be, however, dominated by the Kemalist and nationalist elites of CHP and MHP.

likely for future inconsistencies to arise between the country's economic and other external relations. This will be the case if business elites continue to have influence over most of the Turkish economy. If this reality changes, for example due to protectionist policies or political intervention in the economy, Turkey's economic interdependencies will become dependent on diplomatic relations and security considerations. This is a development which could have a negative impact on the country given that its economic sector is perhaps the most expanded and that which keeps it connected to the region and the world.

Overall, Turkey is a complicated country the foreign policy of which is subject to the constantly changing regional realities. Moreover, it is a country that is undergoing a significant domestic transformation which despite its great success, has recently polarised society and increased social, economic and political instability. Indeed, no matter how committed Turkey may be to contributing to a more stable and peaceful Middle East, or how much it aspires to a leading regional role, the international and regional system is something that it cannot control; just like any other country. This means that Turkey should always be prepared to deal with the multitude of problems that could arise in its volatile neighbourhood.

But in order for a country to be able to successfully manage threats, bilateral relations, or play a meaningful and constructive role in its external environment, it should first deal with the problems within reach and the issues that it can address; namely, the domestic social, political and economic scene. When outstanding issues, such as the country's democratic consolidation, its

human rights record, the Kurdish question and the treatment of other minorities get on a track to resolution, then Turkey's domestic contradictions will be minimised. In turn, TFP can become less vulnerable to conflicting domestic interests. At the same time, despite the fact that Turkey has developed greatly in many respects under the AKP, such positive changes would lead to a more stable democratic state and, therefore, to a clearer foreign policy orientation.

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Appendix I: List of Interviewees

Title	Name	Affiliations	Type of Interview	Base of Interview(ee)	Year
Dr.	Özlem Tür	Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University	In Person	Ankara, Turkey	23 September 2013
Dr.	Nikos Moudouros	Department of Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cyprus. Previously, special advisor to former President of the Republic of Cyprus, Dimitris Christofias, on Turkish and Turkish-Cypriot issues	In Person	Nicosia, Cyprus	25 August 2013
Dr.	Gökhan Bacık	Department of International Relations, İpek University. Columnist, Today's Zaman newspaper	In Person	Ankara, Turkey	26 September 2013
Dr.	İhsan Bal	Chairman of the Scientific Committee, International Strategic Research Organization (USAK)	In Person	Ankara, Turkey	25 September 2013
Mr.	Osman Bahadır Dincer	Researcher, International Strategic Research Organization (USAK)	In Person	Ankara, Turkey	25 September 2013
Dr. Ambassador (ret.)	Ali Engin Oba	Head of Department of International Relations, Çağ University. Advisor to Chairman of Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Studies.	In Person	Ankara, Turkey	12 June 2013
Ambassador (ret.)	Oktay Aksoy	Foreign Policy Institute	In Person	Ankara, Turkey	13 June 2013
Ambassador (ret.)	Reşat Arim	Foreign Policy Institute	In Person	Ankara, Turkey	13 June 2013

Dr.	Osman Faruk Loğoğlu	Deputy Chairman, Republican People's Party (CHP)	Via email	Ankara, Turkey	30 September 2013
Mr.	Kivanç Özcan	Parliamentary Advisor to the Republican People's Party (CHP)	In Person	Ankara, Turkey	24 September 2013
Dr.	Bahadır Kaleağası	International Coordinator and EU Representative, Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TÜSİAD), Brussels Branch	Over the phone	Brussels, Belgium	03 October 2013
--	Identity of the interviewee in possession of the author	Research Associate, Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TÜSİAD), Brussels Branch	Over the phone	Brussels, Belgium	03 October 2013
Dr.	Ahmet Sözen	Chair of the Department of Political Science and International Relations and Director of the Cyprus Policy Center, Eastern Mediterranean University	In Person	Famagusta, Cyprus	26 December 2013
Dr.	Marios P. Efthymiopoulos	Founder and CEO of Strategy International, think tank; Visiting Scholar, Harriman Institute, University of Columbia, New York	In Person	Nicosia, Cyprus	26 January 2013
Dr.	Louis Fishman	Assistant Professor, History Department, Brooklyn College, City University of New York	Skype	Istanbul, Turkey	09 January 2014
	Turkish Academic no. 1		Conversation in Person	Ankara, Turkey	13 June 2013
	Turkish Academic no. 2		Conversation in Person	Istanbul, Turkey	13 October 2012